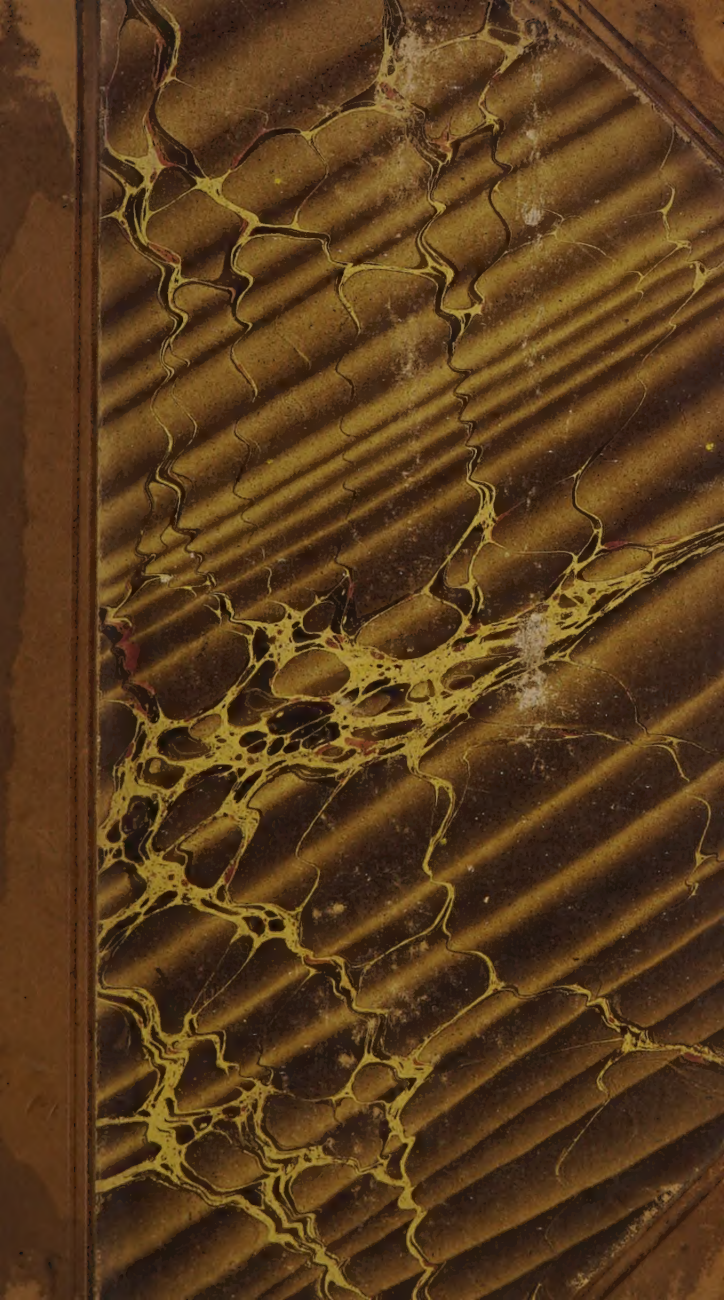






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THE
CHRISTIAN UNITARIAN

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

"This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and
Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent."—JOHN xvii. 3.

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THE
CHRISTIAN UNITARIAN.

VOL. I.]

FEBRUARY, 1862.

[No. 1.

CHRISTIAN UNITARIANISM.

IN presenting to the public the first number of our Magazine, its earliest pages may most appropriately be occupied with a brief statement of the general views which are embraced under the name of *Christian Unitarianism*. Those views are misunderstood by many; by some they are misrepresented; and we feel that we cannot too plainly set forth the principles which we advocate, and the doctrines for which we contend.

Christian Unitarians unhesitatingly and gratefully acknowledge the divine revelation which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament; they believe that "God, who, at sundry times and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son Jesus Christ." They have applied their minds diligently to the study of the Sacred Volume, and have availed themselves of all the critical knowledge they could command, to free the Scriptures from the errors and corruptions which, in the lapse of ages, had crept into them. In this work they have been joined by Christian scholars of every Protestant Church, and by not a few of the Roman Catholic communion. They have never doubted that God supernaturally revealed his will for the instruction, guidance, and salvation of men, and that this revelation is contained in the Sacred Volume. So little sympathy have Christian Unitarians had with scepticism and unbelief, that they have been among the most prominent and successful apologists for the truth of revelation, against the assaults of its enemies. In proof of this important fact, we may mention, "The Reasonableness

of Christianity," by John Locke, and "The Credibility of the Gospel History," by Nathaniel Lardner, works which, under God, were a chief means of stemming the torrent of infidelity that, in the early part of the past century, swept over England; and, in our own time, "The Evidences of Christianity," by Dr. Channing, designed and powerfully calculated to check the growing spirit of unbelief that had manifested itself in the United States of America. And it is right to add, that the position which these and other defenders of the Christian Faith held as Christian Unitarians, gave them an advantage over their opponents, which other writers on the same side did not possess; as they were required to maintain only the great truths of the Gospel, and not the superstitious and false doctrines that had grown around it. We gratefully acknowledge that the Holy Scriptures contain a revelation of the will of God, and we believe that we best exhibit our thankfulness for such a gift by diligently seeking to understand its teachings, and humbly endeavouring to obey them. The student of nature gladly avails himself of the telescope, the microscope, and every other aid within his reach, in order that he may penetrate further into the workings of the Almighty, and understand more of his mind: so would we seek the assistance which is afforded by the history of the Holy Land, the manners and customs of its people, an enlightened Biblical criticism, and everything else that would throw light on the sacred page. But as the telescope would be worthless without an eye to use it, so would all the knowledge which from many channels flows to us for the better understanding of the Scriptures be useless, if we had not our reasoning powers whereby to apply it; and we therefore contend for our reason and the right of using it, not to dictate to God, or to cavil at his revelation, but to examine and understand his Word. We do not distrust or disparage our reasoning powers; on the contrary, we value them highly, and bless God for so noble a gift; but neither do we exalt our reason above revelation, and refuse our assent to everything that cannot be brought down to its finite comprehension. The one never should be placed in antagonism to the other, for they are designed to afford mutual aid. We use our reason to satisfy ourselves that

the Scripture contains a revelation, and we employ it also to learn what that revelation teaches.

When we open the Holy Scriptures, our thoughts are at once attracted to him who is its great subject—Jesus Christ;—greater than patriarch, or prophet, or apostle—he stands out before all others, “the Son of the living God”—“the only-begotten of the Father.” To him the spirit was given without measure—he was all perfect—“holy, harmless, undefiled”—every word he uttered, every act he performed, every thought he entertained was in perfect harmony with the will of God. By miracles he attested his divine mission; and when, in the wise and merciful plans of God for the redemption of the world, he meekly suffered death on the cross, he was raised from the dead, and thus “declared to be the Son of God with power.” To him we look with sentiments of reverence and trust, such as we could entertain for no other being that ever tabernacled in the flesh. We turn to him, as the manifestation of God’s truth and love, for our pardon, our peace, our comfort, our salvation; and through him we are enabled to cherish a lively faith in the future and eternal life. Believing that God sent him, and that God was with him, we trust in him as our teacher and Master. In the words of the sainted Henry Ware, we believe that “his doctrines and his promises, his precepts and his threatenings have divine authority; and in no case could they have more.”

Respecting the nature of our blessed Lord, Christian Unitarians have differed; but respecting his divine mission, never. None of them have ever entertained the belief that he was a *mere man*. Such an opinion would contradict the plainest teachings of the sacred record, and therefore set at nought the credibility of that volume which it has been the effort of the most gifted minds among them to defend. When any one arrives, from whatever cause, or by whatever means, at the conclusion that our Lord is a mere man, possessing a mission only like Socrates and Lyeurgus, Howard and Channing, he ceases to be in any just sense a Christian—he is simply a Deist.

Christian Unitarians hold that there is one God, and that God is essentially and entirely *one*. This leading doctrine, lying at the foundation of all true religion, may

be illustrated and enforced from the great volume of nature, whether we contemplate the animal or the vegetable world, the productions of the earth or its crust; whether we regard the forms of life that now exist, or those that flourished thousands, perhaps millions of years ago, and are now preserved in their rocky tombs; whether we consider the ball on which we live and its mighty revolutions, or those other globes, which, far removed from us, move through their vast orbits in obedience to the same law. But we come to the Scriptures, and we find this doctrine clearly set forth both in the Old Testament and the New. The great truth which was enunciated by Moses—"Hear, O Israel! the Lord our God is one Lord," is repeated and confirmed by Christ himself. An idea formed from the Platonic philosophy, and early engrafted on the pure Gospel, taught that while God was one, he existed in Three Persons; and this opinion gradually spread itself through the Christian Churches, so that for many ages, and in our own day, the vast majority of professing Christians entertain it, and are therefore called Trinitarians. We regard this tenet as erroneous, and contrary to the teachings of Christ and his Apostles, and we therefore take the name of *Unitarians*: we are Christian Unitarians. It is true that our Trinitarian brethren hold the doctrine of a Trinity *in Unity*, and, therefore, might claim, as indeed they do, the name of Unitarian. To dispute about a name would be folly; but a belief in God as one being in one person we hold to be important Scriptural truth, and therefore we contend for it, and are willing to bear the reproach and derision which such a profession so largely draws upon us.

Revelation, which proclaims the strict unity of God, also unfolds to us his character, teaching that he is always and essentially a God of love, and representing him under the endearing name of Father. A great object of Christ's mission was to set forth the deep and unfailing love of God towards his human children, and hence we find him so frequently proclaiming it. The love of God is manifested in the providence which guards and blesses all; but here our view of it is bounded by the horizon of time; and clouds of sorrow and trial often hide from us its pure effulgence: in the

Gospel that love is concentrated and displayed in all its wonderful power for the pardon, the comfort, and the salvation of mankind. We cling to this doctrine of God's parental character—his universal and ceaseless love, as well as his infinite and unerring justice: therefore we do not entertain the doctrines of election and predestination, which divines have fancied that they found in the Sacred Records, and we rejoice to declare that the Scriptures, rightly and intelligently interpreted, teach no dogma so monstrous and absurd. And for a similar reason we reject the Calvinistic theory respecting Christ's death. To that death we attach all importance, and we regard the cross as the most appropriate and touching emblem of our religion: we gratefully confess that "Christ died the just for the unjust to bring us unto God;" but we do not believe that God punished his Son, or poured out on him the wrath that else had plunged a sinful world into the depths of eternal misery. We believe in the atonement, or reconciliation through Christ; but we reject the idea of a vicarious punishment, and we argue, on grounds to us most satisfactory, that such a doctrine was not held by the early Christians, and that it has grown out of a misconception of figurative language in the Scriptures.

Christian Unitarians believe in the prevalence of sin, and in the sinfulness of men. Who that considers the history of the human race, and the condition of society even in Christian lands, can disbelieve? but we maintain that none are answerable for the sins of their forefathers, and cannot, therefore, be justly punished for them. Over this subject of sin we admit that much mystery hangs, but we repose in the goodness and justice of our heavenly Father, and we believe that He will make all things work together for the good of his children, and for his own glory. We cannot too strongly dwell on the evil of sin, and the danger in which it places us. We see its sad effects in the deeds of violence, cruelty, sensuality, and selfishness, which prevail even where the light of the Gospel shines, and the doctrines of the Gospel are professed. The human body, which was designed to be a temple of the Holy Ghost, is too often the habitation of the devil; and the soul, which was made capable of the

most loving and devout affections, is too often the abode of the vilest passions. But we see in the precious and sanctifying truths of the Gospel the great power by which sin may be overthrown, and righteousness may be established. Beyond this life, the Gospel unfolds to us another and an endless existence, and, teaching us that we shall be judged for the deeds done in the body, suggests to us the momentous interests that are bound up with this brief earthly being. To guide us on this perilous voyage, and bring us to the haven of peace and glory, how precious is the religion of Christ! All that is important in that religion we believe to be embraced in Christian Unitarianism: the authority of revelation—the divine mission of Christ—the deep and unfailing love of God our heavenly Father—pardon and reconciliation for the sinner through Christ Jesus—judgment and eternal life.

Reader, whatever be the Christian name you bear, do you not perceive in the views we have thus in outline sketched to you, the very doctrines which you have yourself gathered from a perusal of the Holy Scriptures—the simple “truth as it is in Jesus”—“the faith once delivered to the saints!” To maintain the authority of this revelation against those who would openly assail, or stealthily undermine it, and to explain and illustrate its precious truths, disentangling them from the errors that have gathered round them, is the object of *THE CHRISTIAN UNITARIAN*. May God bless the humblest and feeblest efforts in so good a work!

ONE of the excellences of Christianity is, that it is not an abstruse theory, not wrapped up in abstract phrases, but taught us in facts, in narratives. It lives, moves, speaks, and acts before our eyes. Christian love is not taught us in cold precepts. It speaks from the cross. So immortality is not a vague promise. It breaks forth like the morning from the tomb near Calvary. It becomes a glorious reality in the person of the rising Saviour, and his ascension opens to our view the heaven into which he enters. It is this historical form of our religion which peculiarly adapts it to childhood, to the imagination and heart which open first in childhood.—*Channing*.

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

A LETTER TO THE REV. J. J. TAYLER, ON THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST
AND OTHER MATTERS, BY THE REV. DR. MONTGOMERY.

[As the letter of Mr. Tayler, to which the following is a reply, has been very widely circulated in a pamphlet, entitled "Non-Subscribing Creed-making Reviewed," we think it right to publish Dr. Montgomery's answer; and in order that we may present it to our readers in an unbroken form, we have added considerably to the size of our present number.—ED. CH. UN.]

REV. AND DEAR SIR,—You are aware that, save in a passing reference, I have not condescended to notice the unprovoked, unmerited, and indecent abuse heaped upon upon me, almost unceasingly during the last five years, by the editor of your London *Inquirer* and his Correspondents. In adopting this forbearing course, I was largely influenced by the assurance of calm and judicious friends that the very fierceness of the assaults supplied an abundant antidote to their virulence; and by the firm conviction that no man in this kingdom—not even the writers themselves—actually *believed* a single item of the accusations so unscrupulously urged against me. To all those groundless charges in the past, and to all similar accusations in the future, I hereby reply, once for all; and my simple answer is—a public and professional life extending over more than half a century, and during which, as you have yourself been courteous enough to admit, I have not laboured entirely without name and without success in the sacred cause of civil and religious liberty. Let those, then, who may find it a gratification to their nature, "rave against me until doomsday:" they cannot unsay my recorded words, uttered in the ardour of youth and prime of manhood, in defence of truth and freedom; they cannot undo my earnest labours, performed at the expense of no small amount of personal and family sacrifices, for the establishment of a thoroughly free *Christian* Church in my native land; they cannot deprive me of the soul-cheering regard of wise and good men, that have seen "my goings-out and my comings-in" amongst them for more than fifty years; they cannot efface "my footprints from the sands of time;" they cannot break the life-sustaining prop of

conscience; they cannot obliterate the blessed memories of the past, nor cloud the glorious prospects of the future!

But, Mr. Tayler, though I have thus dismissed *for ever* "the puny whipsters" that have so unmanfully toiled to wound and injure me in my old age, *you* are a man of an entirely different stamp and calibre, whom I am proud to meet on the battle-field to which you have so gently challenged me, with all the gallant courtesy of a true knight; and, in the words of ancient chivalry, I say, "May God defend the right!" These words, I use not lightly, but, I assure you, in a spirit of devout and earnest supplication, as sincere as man ever uttered. In deepest truth, I feel awed and humbled, in presence of the *mighty issues*, both direct and collateral, which, in your long and elaborate letter published in the *Inquirer* of the 7th instant, you have called upon me to try. I say *mighty issues*; for we both admit that the direct and grand issue to be tried—viz., the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ—lies at the very foundation of Christianity! An error here, is, therefore, undoubtedly fundamental, and, in my mind, it must be fatal; for I receive with unhesitating faith the words of Paul, "If Christ be not risen from the dead, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is vain also." "Then they which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished;" for, "if in *this* life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most miserable." In truth, the resurrection of Jesus is the very key-stone of the arch of Christianity, the removal of which would instantly cause the entire structure to crumble into ruin. In the discussion of a theme so transcendently momentous, all human vanity and human passion should be humbled in the dust. The maintenance of "the truth as it is in Jesus" ought to be our only aim; and his benignant spirit should preside in our souls. Although, therefore, two plain sentences, which I incidentally uttered in the course of an extempore address at a public meeting, evidently disturbed your equanimity for a moment, and caused you to intermingle some gall with the sweetness of the letter with which you have favoured me, I shall do great injustice to my high estimate of your character as an accomplished scholar and a most amiable gentleman, should I write one word *designed* to give you pain. At the same

time, I remember the solemn words of the prophet, "Woe be to them that call evil good, and good evil; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter." Believing, therefore, that, with all your mental attainments, all your moral excellence, and all your admitted integrity, you labour under a strange and unintelligible hallucination with regard to the *crowning miracle of Christianity*, which, owing mainly to your high character and eminent position as Principal and Theological Professor of the chief Unitarian College in England, *has* done, and is likely to do, incalculable evil to faith, and morals, and Scriptural Unitarianism, I shall freely canvass your opinions, and place them under the strong and searching light of Gospel truth. Should even the mildest execution of this task inflict temporary pain, I shall sincerely lament it; but the fault will not be mine. Should it prevent, in any degree, the farther extension of what I deem deplorable error, and bring consolation to even a single weary pilgrim of mortality, I shall thankfully rejoice.

I have spoken of the *direct* and *collateral* issues which you have raised in your letter; and, in order to lay them clearly before yourself and the public, both for distinct consideration and convenient reference, I shall place them under separate heads—merely lamenting that the necessary limits of a single letter will only permit me to touch the mere surface of subjects, *each* of which would require a long communication for its proper discussion.

1. The grand and *direct* question at issue between us is this—"Was the Resurrection of Christ, as recorded in the Gospels, mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, and referred to in the Epistles, a *Bodily* or a *Spiritual* Resurrection?"

You insinuate, my good friend, that "I had not taken the trouble to read through the controversy in which you were engaged on the subject of the resurrection some eighteen months ago;" and hint that "I ought not to have pronounced so sweeping a judgment on mere hearsay." In this supposition you are entirely mistaken; for you are a man of far too much mark in the literary world, and you occupy a far too prominent position, as the chosen Principal of a Unitarian College, and the chief theological trainer of the future ministers of English Uni-

tarian Churches, to publish anything which would not be largely read by men of all denominations. Personally, as a very humble labourer in the same field with yourself, and striving earnestly to prepare candidates for the ministry in our Irish Unitarian Churches, I had anxiously *read*, and carefully *noted*, every sentence of the controversy in which you were engaged about two years ago. In that controversy you shed an amazing quantity of ink, and covered a wonderful space in *The Christian Reformer*, in defence of your melancholy article in *The National Review*, and in *attempted* replies to "A Unitarian Minister" and "A Unitarian Layman." I felt, and still feel, astonished that your immense ink-shedding and painful labours, in relation to a point which appears, to unmetaphysical minds, to stand as distinctly on the New Testament records as the sun appears to shine in the firmament at noon-day, did not create some doubt in your mind, as to the tenableness of the position which you had taken up. I wondered how you could believe that the cardinal miracle of that Gospel which was specially preached to the poor and ignorant, was so obscurely set forth in the Sacred Records as to require learned critical researches, and countless folios of manuscript, to render it intelligible. I felt surprise, that you considered the most important truth of Christianity as indebted, according to your admission, to an arrogant and self-sufficient ex-Professor of Hanover, and to yourself, for its proper elucidation—in opposition to the views of Lardner and Priestley, and all the other "burning and shining lights" of the Christian world for upwards of eighteen hundred years. Above all, when such able and accomplished ministers as Edward Higginson, Calrow Means, Samuel Bache, and so acute a critic as "A Unitarian Layman," "mightily convinced you out of the Scriptures," and, in vulgar parlance, "did not leave you a leg to stand on," I felt mortified that, instead of acknowledging your error, you only dived deeper into mysteries, and metaphysics, and unprofitable researches, and verbal criticisms, and sentences "hard to be understood."

You perceive, then, that I *had* read the controversy *thoroughly*; and it was on your own latest showing that I based my brief reference to your opinions in Ballyclare.

Long previously, however, I had marked the tendencies and specialties of your mental constitution. Fully thirty years ago, when I enjoyed the pleasure of making your acquaintance in Manchester, I perceived the inherent bias of your mind towards hair-splitting and mysticism; and when, about that time, you went to the Continent for the purpose of study, I watched with great interest the effects of German philosophy and rationalism upon your religious views and principles. I felt assured that you would necessarily become a man of mark and influence at home; and, consequently, I experienced no inconsiderable alarm, lest one so estimable and accomplished should adopt the wild theological speculations of his new associates, and secure for them a footing in England, through the natural attraction of his character and attainments. My fears, on this head, were not at once conspicuously realised; though it soon became evident, from your devotion to German literature and theology, as well as from the less intelligible character of your style and writings, that your mind was gradually becoming imbued with the mystical theories of "the new school." Your repeated visits to the Continent evidently strengthened these impressions; and, so far back as five years ago, your letters on "The State of Religion in Germany, and among Unitarians in England," broached, substantially, your present views in regard to Christ's resurrection. In point of fact, Germanism seems to have completely fascinated you, as a lighted candle fascinates a moth. You flitted round it, and round it, in constantly lessening circles, until, some two years ago, when the sixth volume of "Ewald on the Apostolic Age" fairly drew you into the flame, and miserably scorched your theological wings.

You will pardon me, I trust, for a perhaps uncourteous truthfulness in saying that your Article on Ewald, in the *National Review*, is, in my mind, a most melancholy production, whether it be considered in its object or in its execution. The *object* evidently was, to place before the public, *as worthy of acceptance*, the infidel views of a writer whom you yourself call "arrogant and self-sufficient," with regard to the crowning miracle of Christianity; and its *execution* was so managed as to enable the anonymous author to say, if discovered, "I merely reviewed the work

of an eminent writer, without expressing either approval or disapproval of his opinions." Was this quite worthy of the amiable and candid J. J. Tayler; and are you quite satisfied with it on calm reflection? The review of a book may be legitimately undertaken, either to refute its errors if it be bad, or to commend its principles if it be good; but I think the most unscrupulous casuist will scarcely maintain that it is justifiable to place food containing concealed poison before the ignorant and unwary, without supplying an antidote, or even warning them of danger. Now, Mr. Tayler, in reviewing Ewald and quoting largely from his pages, you must either have approved of his opinions, or you must have condemned them. If you did the former, it would have been only manly and candid to state the fact and the grounds of your approbation; if you did the latter, it would only have been fair to the public to guard them against delusion. But you did neither; and that silence is more eloquent than words; for it proclaims to every man capable of thinking, that you secretly approved and laboured to diffuse opinions which you hesitated to avow. Indeed, your entire Article confirms this irresistible common-sense view of the case; for your sympathies, from beginning to end, are indisputably with your author; and in no instance, so far as I can discern, do you even attempt to prevent the force of his principal statements from falling, without interruption, upon the minds of your readers.

I am quite aware that in your several *Defences*, as if "scared at the sounds yourself had made," you endeavour to establish a distinction between your own views of Christ's resurrection and those of Ewald; but, to my mind, it seems "a distinction without a difference;" or, rather, the balance of intelligibility and argument favours the German. To render this plain, I shall set forth the view of each in his own language.

Ewald, in substance, says:—"That the interment of the body in Joseph of Arimathea's tomb was only temporary—that the disciples afterwards buried it in another grave, in Galilee—and there was no revival of the body, but merely a spiritual resurrection of him in the hearts of his followers."

You, Mr. Tayler, say of the resurrection—"The fact

itself, giving it all the religious significance which is claimed for it, is still open to the construction which some men *have* put, and *will* put, on it—that the death was only an *apparent* one, succeeded by a return of suspended animation”—evidently giving countenance to this profane conjecture. Subsequently, however, you arrive at your present theory, and say—“I cannot account for the recorded change in the conduct and language of the disciples, without the supposition of some *presence* visiting them, which they recognised as that of a real person from the invisible world. I call this a *spiritual* fact: I regard it as a *spiritual* and not a *bodily* resurrection.” And, thereupon, you demand of me to admit, in future, that “you believe in the resurrection as firmly as myself.”

Now, Mr. Tayler, I say unfeignedly, that, out of sincere regard towards you, for the gratification of my own feelings, and for the sake of countless minds which your strange opinions may unhappily affect, I should most heartily rejoice to make the required admission, could I do so consistently with the supreme allegiance which I owe to truth and conscience. I admit that, with some variations, you have adopted the exploded fallacies of the old *Docetæ* and *Phantasiastæ*; and that you firmly believe in the validity of your *own* speculations; but I utterly deny that your assumptions are sustained by even a *single* portion of the New Testament Records, fairly construed. Those records, as you well know, alone supply the *entire* knowledge which we possess of the early history of Christ and Christianity. If you reject them as *fictions* our controversy ends: we have no common ground on which to debate; you may indulge in ten thousand speculations, though, in my mind, Ewald’s re-burial in Galilee, and his in-dwelling, or “*subjective*” Christ, are more rational than your apparently sanctioned theory of “suspended animation, and an “*objective*” Christ, or a mere outward phantasm! But if you admit the genuineness and authenticity of the Records, we have then a common battle-field, and may draw our arrows from the same Divine quiver; though I think it highly probable, from my knowledge of the “School of Thought,” which you have so largely assisted to establish, we might even then entertain very different ideas as to the temper and value

of the weapons of our spiritual warfare. I, for instance, having satisfied myself as to the validity of the evidence which supports the Divine authority of Christianity, humbly and submissively endeavour to ascertain what it *does* teach; whilst *you*, as I am forced to infer from some of your remarks in this controversy, consider yourself authorised to decide what it *ought* to teach. I do not say this lightly—for the burthen of your arguments, *constantly reiterated*, against the bodily resurrection of Christ is, that it is *incredible*; and that there are some trifling discrepancies in the several *details* of the event. Now, I do not consider it one whit more “incredible that God should raise the dead,” for the accomplishment of some grand purpose of benevolence, than I do that He should have created man at first. And as to the small discrepancies in minor details, to which you attach so much importance as practically annulling the *concurrent* testimony of all the sacred penmen, in relation to the grand event itself, they are not of a feather’s weight in the estimation of those who do not believe in *verbal* inspiration, whilst they conclusively prove that there was no collusion or system-making amongst the several Writers. Your views of the New Testament Records on this point are to me at once painful and puzzling. You say, for instance, “that certain circumstances, in spite of several passages (of Scripture), which are evidently intended to produce an opposite effect, leave, nevertheless, an almost irresistible impression upon the mind that we are dealing with something different from the corporeal frame in which Jesus of Nazareth had once lived, and which a few days previously had been deposited in the grave.” Here you fully admit that the sacred writers “evidently intended” to teach the doctrine of the *bodily* resurrection of Christ. Did they evidently intend, then, to teach a falsehood? It must be so, if your theory be correct; and your “impression” must necessarily be a safer guide to Christians than their “intention!” Again, you say in your letter—“For myself, I have little doubt that traditions of different origin and date have mingled in the evangelical narration of events subsequent to the crucifixion.” In other words, as Principal and Theological Professor in a Unitarian College, you inform your own students and the world

that where "the evangelical narrations" conflict with your "impressions" they are simply "traditions"—that is, old fables and idle tales! Mr. Tayler, this is very sad, considering your great position and influence; and the more so because you have published your estimate of "the evangelical narratives" with such an air of simplicity and indifference as proves it to be merely your *ordinary* habit of thought and speech. I shall not trust my pen to write what I feel upon this subject—what, I have good reason to believe, thousands of the best Unitarians in England, lay and clerical, think, and feel, and speak upon it. I shall only say, if the Scriptures are to be used as a mere "nose of wax"—something to be turned, and twisted, and distorted according to every man's folly and caprice, instead of being viewed as our secure guides to earthly peace and everlasting enjoyment, then "woe be unto us and to our children:" woe be unto our country and the world!

Not knowing how much or how little of "the evangelical narratives" you consider to be mere "traditions," nor being acquainted with the nature and extent of the authority which you believe to dwell in *any* portion of the Scriptures, I nevertheless avail myself of the opening which you have given me to expose the utter untenableness of what has been called, not inaptly, "the newest phase of infidelity," and to vindicate the most glorious doctrine of the "Gospel Dispensation"—that of a risen Saviour.

Your theory of "a spiritual resurrection" carries the stamp of error in its very name. A *spirit* could not die, could not be buried, could not rise from the grave. A Roman guard was not appointed to prevent the removal of a spirit, nor was "a very great stone" placed and sealed to impede its escape from the tomb. In fact, the resurrection of a spirit involves a direct contradiction in terms; it is opposed to the simplest principles of common sense; and is equally unintelligible and impossible. To argue against such a speculation would be merely to beat the wind; and the endeavour to raise it into a fundamental doctrine of the Gospel, whilst it is not once mentioned in the evangelical records, seems to be little else than a bold attempt to prove how far a respectable name and

character could give currency to the wildest delusions and the most anti-Scriptural allegations.

The real, genuine, *bodily* resurrection of Jesus, being the grand support of all our Christian hopes, happily rests upon a foundation far broader, immeasurably more secure, than that of any other fact transmitted from ancient times. The folly and malignity of man, at the time of the crucifixion, united with the wisdom of God, in bringing the strong and concurrent testimony of enemies to sustain the declarations of friends; whilst many *collateral* circumstances (as you have, yourself, been forced to acknowledge), corroborate the clear and unvarying testimony of *direct* statements. The evidence, in fact, is ample, cumulative, irresistible, irrefutable,—I mean, of course, to any real believer in the truth of the New Testament Records. It spreads itself out in various directions, and under various forms—all converging, nevertheless, in the one grand central truth and fact.

To the evidence supplied by our Blessed Saviour himself, both before and after his crucifixion, I first solicit attention. Here is the record of John's Gospel, 2nd chapter:—

18 Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?

19 Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.

20 Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?

21 But he spake of the temple of his *Body*.

22 When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.

We have the record of Luke, 24th chapter, in relation to what followed the resurrection, as the disciples had been conversing with one another concerning that wonderful event:—

36 And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace *be* unto you.

37 But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit.

38 And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?

39 Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I, myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.

41 And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat?

42 And they gave him a piece of broiled fish, and of an honey-comb.

43 And he took *it*, and did *eat* before them.

A sequel to this remarkable narrative is given in John, 20th chapter:—

24 But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.

25 The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.

26 And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: *then* came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace *be* unto you.

27 Then saith he to Thomas, Reach higher thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach higher thy hand, and thrust *it* into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.

29 Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me thou hast believed: blessed *are* they that have not seen, and *yet* have believed.

Now, Mr. Tayler, I ask you, in all seriousness, whether language ever conveyed the statement of a fact, in terms more distinct than those in which the passages above quoted speak of the *bodily* resurrection of Christ? As if anticipating, through a Divine prescience, the daring and sceptical follies of the present age, our Saviour supplied, in several ways, the most incontestible evidence that he had risen from the grave, with the *identical* body in which he had lived and died. Nay, Sir, the very pith and power of the resurrection, as a miracle proving the Divine Mission of Christ, consist in its *reality*. The appearance of a spirit, or of some vague phantasm, would have been no miracle at all. This is the very idea of Paul (to whose testimony you seem to attach some little weight), when he says (Acts xvii. 31):—"God hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained—whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."

In truth, Mr. Tayler, I have no faculties to comprehend how you have ventured to deny the plainest teachings of the New Testament, and to supersede them by a childish theory of the old heretics, unless you repudiate the

authority of the Records themselves, or impute to Christ that he strove, with wonderful ingenuity, to practise an imposition upon his disciples (and through them upon the world), by leading them to believe that he mingled with them in the *body*, whilst he only appeared amongst them as a *phantasm*! If you utterly reject the Divine authority of the Records, which most Christians deem *sacred*, I can perfectly understand your present views, and still esteem you as a most amiable gentleman—though, in such case, I must, from my stand-point, consider your position as a *Christian* Professor, somewhat anomalous; but if you admit the authority and accuracy of the Records, and *yet* maintain that Christ emphatically *declared* himself to be risen in the *body*, whilst he was only a mere *shadow*—then, I confess myself to be inextricably puzzled in relation to your views and feelings.

I am familiar with your repeated statements, that this matter of the resurrection is, after all, “but a choice of difficulties,” and that it is consequently a matter of indifference on which side we stand. How you reconcile this with your admissions elsewhere, that it is “a *fundamental* doctrine, and the source of your highest aspirations and hopes,” I cannot say; but this I *do* say, that two views of the same subject, directly opposed to each other, cannot *both* be true: and I have to learn, on some higher authority than yours, that in relation to the Cardinal Miracle of the Gospel, which admittedly affects our dearest interest in time and eternity, it matters not whether we hold by truth or error! This lax and mischievous liberality would be equally applicable to any of the most important subjects of human thought—the existence of a God, for instance, the immortality of the soul, and a future state of rewards and punishments—all of which have been controverted by arguments far more powerful than any which you have adduced in support of a phantom resurrection!

If Jesus and his earliest disciples have spoken the truth, in the clear and irresistible texts which I have quoted, the *actual, bodily* resurrection of Christ rests upon a basis as firm as the foundations of the earth; and it would only be an unprofitable waste of time and space (neither of which I have to spare) to cite the countless passages in

the Gospels, the Acts, and the Epistles, which, as every school-boy knows, refer to it as the crowning fact, that pre-eminently attested the Divine Mission of the Redeemer. "The preaching of Jesus and the resurrection" was the grand work of Paul and all the other Apostles: and as in his providence "God maketh the wrath of man to praise Him," so, in his abounding grace, he overruled the cunning of the Jews, in setting a guard of Roman soldiers around the sepulchre, to the irresistible proof of that wonderful event on which the foundations of our everlasting hopes immovably repose. Had not this precaution been employed, the infidel theory of "suspended animation," or "a re-burial in Galilee," might have possessed some plausibility: but the discipline of the Roman army made it death for a soldier to be found asleep upon his watch; and the clumsy fiction of the Jews, that the *entire* guard (certainly not less than sixteen soldiers) all at once fell asleep, refutes itself by its mere absurdity, and confirms the truth of the Gospel narratives.

It is my unhesitating conviction that, if there had been no *bodily* resurrection of Christ, we should, this day, have no Christianity. The abstract principles of the Gospel are essentially unpalatable to the indolent, the selfish, and the sensual; and besides, the unlettered disciples were neither inclined nor qualified to teach them. In fact, all their hopes, which were merely earthly and selfish, had been completely prostrated by the death of their Master, of whose spiritual kingdom they had no correct appreciation. The Jews "had smitten the shepherd, and the sheep were scattered abroad." Despised as Galileans, surrounded by inveterate enemies, crushed in heart and hope, scarcely two of them were found together; and to suppose that, under such circumstances, they either would or could have removed the lifeless body of a crucified impostor, would transcend all our conceptions of human fatuity! What event, then, had the power to draw them again into one place—to fill their drooping hearts with joy, and their mourning souls with a divine exultation—to arouse them from the trembling timidity of the feeble hare to the serene courage of the indomitable lion? This sudden, amazing, mighty change was solely pro-

duced by gazing upon "the renovated temple of their Master's body;" by the well-known sounds of his gentle voice; by eating, drinking, and conversing with him during forty days; and, finally, by his being "received up out of their sight!" The Gospel narrative, *alone*, presents a *cause* adequate to the *effect*. All other theories, Mr. Tayler (and your own not the least), fall utterly short of accounting for this instantaneous and miraculous change; and still more for the persevering fortitude and self-sacrifice with which they proclaimed the resurrection of their Master, in the face of Jewish persecution—in the midst of bonds and imprisonments, of scourging and death! Human pen could not write, human mind could not conceive the glorious and unwavering fidelity of those blessed apostles and martyrs, "whose blood became the seed of the Church." And think you, my good friend, that all those amazing labours and sacrifices were produced by some shadowy, unsubstantial vision, of "a spiritual resurrection?" Were such a theory clearly *written* in the Gospel, it would tax the most unwavering faith to receive it; but when it is not even *hinted* at in the evangelical narratives, I view it as merely "the coinage of the heat-oppressed brain," and turn with devout thankfulness to the plain and palpable fact—that the Apostles and other Disciples, to the number of "five hundred" at least, acted upon their complete, distinct, personal knowledge; whilst those who had seen and heard him *before* his crucifixion, and who subsequently recognised the hand of God in his actual and miraculous restoration to life, viewed it as the fitting precursor of his ascension into heaven.

I have not pressed you upon your entire silence as to the place and condition of Christ's crucified body during the time of those "spiritual appearances" in which you believe. Did it remain in the tomb of Joseph? If so, the Jews would have speedily confounded the Apostles by producing it. Had the Disciples "stolen it away?" If so, they would scarcely have sacrificed their lives in support of a fruitless imposture. Perhaps, after a period of "suspended animation," it naturally awoke and left the sepulchre; and this theory, which you have suggested, would be fairly wrought out by adopting the assertion of

an older and subtler theorist than yourself, who said that Jesus, after leaving the tomb, "separated himself from his followers on a misty mountain top—went down on the other side—and some time afterwards frightened an imaginative young man, named Saul, by shouting to him from an eminence, as he journeyed to Damascus?"

Ah, Mr. Tayler, it is a sad thing to set unscriptural theories afloat upon that momentous subject which lies at the foundation of our everlasting hopes! Were you deeply, thoroughly, unhesitatingly *convinced* of the validity of your speculations, it might be a matter of conscience and duty to spread them before the world, and to cast them, cheerless though they be, into the abodes of human duty and human sorrows. But for publishing your unhappy theories you urge no such conviction. On the contrary, you freely admit them to be but doubtful speculations—to involve only "a choice of *difficulties*"—to be fair subjects for the investigation of philosophical minds! There was "vain philosophy" in the days of Paul, there has been some ever since, and there is much in our own age, "to the weakening of faith;" but I would rather not see it in a theological chair. You, and I, and others who are able "to separate the chaff from the wheat," may sustain no evil from the wildest speculations. We have, besides, countless subsidiary motives to keep us pretty steadily upon the path of duty, had we no religion at all. But, my dear friend, it was not for us, or for such as we are, alone, or even chiefly, that Jesus lived, and taught, and died, and rose again from the dead. He came to shed a divine light, especially upon the abodes of intellectual and moral darkness, to lead sinners to repentance, to bind up broken hearts, to cheer the bed of death, to deprive the grave of its victory, and "to point the way to Heaven, to God!" Had you been left to the natural bent of your own sweet and genial spirit—had no temptation to subtle theorizing been presented to your mind, no man could have appreciated more intensely than yourself the deep and the high things of the Gospel dispensation, with all its solemn train of influences, and blessings, and duties, and responsibilities. But, to effect its grand work of human regeneration, the Gospel must be received in the profound unwavering faith of the mind, and trea-

sured up as "the pearl of great price," in the deepest recesses of the soul. Whatsoever, then, has a tendency to pervert faith, or even to weaken it, amongst the teachers of religion and the masses of the people, is an evil of incalculable magnitude, because it must spread without limit, from generation to generation. On these grounds, I deplore with a sorrow deeper than I have language to express, that a man of your talents, worth, influences, and position, has, in the persevering advocacy of a mere theory, which you, yourself, admit to be very doubtful, struck a blow at the root of the general faith of Christendom, and cast a suspicion upon some, at least, of the most important records, as "traditions of different origin and date." Were you even *certain* of the validity of your promises, and the soundness of your conclusions in these matters, so estimable a man as you are might well have hesitated to proclaim such opinions to the world, feeling, as I think you must feel, that no human being ever *has* been injured, or could be injured, in peace or morals, by a belief in the personal resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ; whilst the rejection of that doctrine might unhinge the faith and destroy the happiness of millions. But if, as you are constrained to admit, your theory has not the *direct* support of even *one* text, whilst the general faith is sustained by a *multitude* of clear and direct statements, whose force you can only obviate by insinuating that they are "traditions," I implore you to consider the solemn responsibility which you incur in labouring, upon such slender and doubtful grounds, to unsettle the faith of the young, to fill Christian pulpits with sceptics, to loosen the hold of religion upon the fathers and mothers of our land, and to break the staff of comfort in the hand of the departing pilgrim of mortality!

Be assured, that I have written thus, only out of the purest regard, and in no presumptuous and unauthorised spirit of lecturing or reproach. I believe that you have acted in this whole affair simply without due consideration, and under the influence of impulses and surroundings of whose power and tendencies you are not fully aware; and firmly relying upon your natural integrity and candour, I am encouraged to hope that you may be induced to reconsider the grounds and tendencies of your opinions,

and to apply your superior powers and attainments to something more profitable than the laborious and ingenious advocacy of doubtful speculations. We are all exceedingly liable to deceive ourselves, or to be deceived by the approbation and sympathies of our immediate associates; and I *am certain* that you are perfectly conscientious in holding, teaching, and publishing the speculations, over which, in common—as I have good reason to know—with very many others of your sincerest friends, I deeply mourn. Few men have been formed by nature more fitted than you are to occupy a position of eminent usefulness and influence; and I *assure* you, that whilst compelled by an imperative sense of duty to defend others from what I believe to be your serious errors, I have never designed, either by speech or pen, to wound or offend you. In truth, I do not think that you will or can take umbrage at *my* gentle expostulations, when you remember that, although some fifteen years my junior, you not long ago engaged in a violent *overt act* of unmerited censure against me; and that even in your letter now before me you indulge in several allusions to my sad “decline and fall.”

Be this as it may, however, “what I have written I *have* written;” and I do not retract a single word or thought which I have uttered. I *have* proved, as I said I *could* prove, “that a Reverend Professor, in London, denied that Jesus Christ ever rose from the dead.” In open defiance of the plainest words and acts of Jesus, both before and after his crucifixion; in utter repudiation of the direct teachings and conduct of his martyred disciples; in thorough contempt for the matured opinions of thousands of the best and most learned Christians that ever lived, you have invented—or rather you have resuscitated—as wild a theory as ever sprung up in human brain; a theory which you are compelled to admit has not the direct support of even a *single text* of Scripture; and which you have, unhappily for yourself and the world, endeavoured “to bolster up” by strongly insinuating that “the evangelical narration” is mere tradition and fable! To use the “retort courteous,” Mr. Tayler, I apply, as appropriate to yourself, the words which you have addressed to me—“You have, doubtless, reasons

which satisfy your own mind, and which, as they are unknown to me, I do not presume to judge;" but I solemnly declare that, according to no rational interpretation of human language, can *I* view you as a believer in the resurrection of Christ, as it is recorded in the New Testament.

I have inevitably occupied so much time and space in relation to the grand and all-important issue which you challenged me to try, that I can only advert to a few of the minor and collateral issues which you have raised in your letter, and even these few I can merely *touch*, instead of discussing them with due argument and illustration. To those which are connected with our main issue I shall first advert—preserving my plan of distinct heads, under numeral figures.

2. You say—"I am confirmed in this view, by a reflection which I cannot suppress—that a bodily resurrection, a mere restoration of flesh and blood and bones to this earth, does not and cannot establish the very point for which it is so strongly urged as indispensable—the doctrine of human immortality." A materialist, such as Dr. Priestley, and a materialist alone, could advocate this view of Christ's resurrection. For my own part, it never constituted the slightest ingredient of my belief in immortality. Though Christ had never risen—though my own body should never rise—my faith in the undying nature of the soul would be as firm as adamant. I feel, however, that the Saviour's resurrection is largely referred to by the evangelical writers as unquestionable proof of his divine mission, and as an earnest and pledge of our own *bodily* resuscitation. Besides, I see in that great fact a strong additional proof that Jesus rose *in the flesh*. I am not, therefore, responsible for the alleged opinions of others, in which I do not participate.

3. Following up your misconception of my views, as expressed in your last quoted sentence, you proceed to charge me, in rather coarse and grating terms, with advocating "a shocking and heathenish idea." You thus address me, not very courteously, I feel, saying—"If *you* find your faith in immortality strengthened by the belief that the bones of a mortal frame were translated into the everlasting home of glorified spirits, far be it from me,

shocking and heathenish as the idea seems to me, to attempt to take from you any prop on which you may feel it *necessary* for your religion to rest." Now, Mr. Tayler, from beginning to end this is an unworthy, *ad captandum* sneer, in which, either to wound an opponent, or to strengthen a weak cause, you unjustly impute to me opinions "shocking and heathenish," which I never held and never expressed—which, indeed, I utterly repudiate. I do not, like you, pretend "to be wise above what is written." I take the Scriptures as I find them; and I receive and interpret them honestly, without the slightest reference to my own preconceived opinions or unauthorised speculations. Nothing ever *has* induced, or *shall* induce me, "to handle the Word of God deceitfully." I never thought or said, therefore, that the *unchanged* human body of Christ as it lived and died, and rose again, "ascended to the home of glorious spirits;" because I believe with Paul, "that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption." What change took place in Christ's natural body previously to his ascension, or by what means that change was effected, so that it became, according to Paul, "a glorious body," I do not perplex myself even with conjecturing: the *fact* is enough for me; the *how* it would be folly to inquire. Doubtless, this is the admission of a mystery; but I am happy to have your concession, that a *fact* may be true, whose *cause* is inscrutable. Wisely and well, you "confess to an utter want of sympathy with that shallow rationalism which will see mysteries nowhere in religion, and exacts from every disclosure of the dim realities of our spiritual being the same matter-of-fact circumstantiality which we look for in the columns of a newspaper." Just so; we must accept evidence as it is applicable to the subject in hand; and I venture to suggest, that on this ground *you* ought not to be *quite* so exacting in regard to the evangelical records. At all events, you can see nothing absurd in admitting that, at some time, and in some mysterious way, such a change took place in the earthly body of Christ, previously to the ascension, that there is nothing either shocking or heathenish in his "inheriting the kingdom of God," in what the apostle calls "a spiritual body." With God all things are possible;

and what Paul says of our coming resurrection probably occurred in relation to the ascension of Jesus—"We shall all be changed *in a moment*; and this corruptible shall put on incorruption." Our present bodies, liable to sin, and sorrow, and pollution, shall be instantaneously fitted for a new and glorious state of existence, and become the suitable and permanent habitations of those immortal souls which God sent his ever blessed Son to sanctify and redeem!

4. You say, "The early disciples had an intense belief in their crucified Master's ascension into heaven, and of his continual maintenance of a *personal* intercourse with them from that spiritual sphere." The first part of this statement is correct, but the second rests upon no foundation either of reason or Scripture. Instead of a personal presence with *themselves*, they considered him as *constantly* "sitting at the right hand of God, making intercession for them;" and whence he should come, in due time, to judge the quick and the dead.

5. You have stated, in substance, in some of your speculations upon this subject, "that the resurrection and ascension of Christ are the same thing, or, at least, mutually involve each other." I clearly perceive the object of this statement. All Christians admit that an amazing change, from a mere earthly to a purified or spiritualized body, took place *before* the ascension; and could you persuade men that the resurrection and ascension were merely part and parcel of the *same* transaction, your phantom Christ would be more conceivable. But for this theory, as for others, you have not the slightest warrant in Scripture, more than you would have for saying that the birth and the death of a man are part and parcel of the same event. The resurrection was clearly a thing of its own kind, distinct and separate from all others, in its facts and circumstances; and equally distinct were the events of the ascension—the two great facts, *i.e.*, the crucifixion and the resurrection, having no relation to each other, save that of necessary antecedent and consequent—just as a man must be born before he can die.

And now, Mr. Tayler, in closing my remarks concerning your views of the fundamental doctrine of the resurrection, I cannot restrain the expression of my surprise

that, with an acute mind, great learning, vast research, and abundant leisure, you have thought and written upon the subject for so many years, and merely arrived at uncertain and untenable conclusions. That a *fundamental* doctrine, in a religion mainly intended for the poor and the ignorant, should seem so obscure and incomprehensible to the learned, is truly marvellous. May you not have conducted your investigations upon some wrong plan? The subject, though all-important, is not large; and the entire evidence bearing upon it lies in a few portions of one small volume. Try again: go to "the fountain of living waters," with an ardent thirst for divine refreshment; and forsake Strauss, Ewald, and all other human "cisterns that can hold no water." Believe me, your course in this matter will do incalculable good or evil—because you are, and must be, "a representative man," from whom thousands of generations may derive their thoughts and principles of action.

6. A considerable vein of quiet censure runs through almost every paragraph of your long letter, my good friend, under the guise of truisms, comparisons, and the formal enunciation of abstract principles. With such things, it would neither be pleasant nor profitable to deal; for, as some portion of what Calvinists call "the old Adam" had evidently arisen within *you* whilst writing them, it is almost certain that I, being far less mild than yourself, should feel the spirit of the sad old primal sinner springing up in *my* breast, if I sat down to pen a reply to your covert attacks and dexterous insinuations. I might possibly be tempted to show that, like some in early times, "you have been carried about by every wind of doctrine"—"ever learning, yet never able to come to a knowledge of the truth;" but all this would be only irritating and unprofitable. I therefore freely accord you all the superiority which, directly or by innuendoes, you justly claim for yourself, as a man of progress, free thought, ardent love of truth, and illimitable toleration and charity. On the contrary, I do not deny that *I* have been a comparatively standing-still Christian—convinced that there *are* such small things as grand, fixed, intelligible, immutable principles in religion—"accustomed," as you politely say, "to receive the round, unqualified affirmations current

amongst theologians, without any clear accompanying ideas." But I let all these things pass, and come to tangible points, where the truth and candour of your assumptions can be measured by the unerring standard of documents and facts. And, in the first place, I take up your direct assertion that I have forsaken those principles, and that course of conduct which you once approved. Your words are—"Years work changes in us all; and you have doubtless reasons for an alteration of tone, on topics where I once found myself entirely in harmony with you." I do not *thank* you, Mr. Tayler, for having made this statement, because you evidently designed it to convey a reproach; but I, nevertheless, heartily rejoice that you have been rash enough to publish it in a tangible form, enabling me, by encountering an antagonist with whom it is not a degradation to contend, to scatter to the winds, once and for ever, the infamous calumnies which selfish and unprincipled men have circulated against myself and others, without ceasing, and in all imaginable forms, during the last five years. How a man of your progressive mind, and one that has so often exemplified in his own person the principle of change, could reproach me with an "alteration of tone," even if such alteration had *actually* occurred, I am not casuist enough to comprehend. Perhaps it is a fair sample of the value attached to free thought in the liberal school of which you are the chief patron and ornament. If a man change *his* views and adopt *yours*, "he is a glorious fellow;" but if, in the dutiful exercise of the talents which God has bestowed, he should *depart* from your opinions—oh! then he is a traitor, a persecutor, an inquisitor; and it is liberal and manly, as little John Thom, of Liverpool, once said *he* would do, to raise "*a howl*" against him, as if he were pickpocket or a murderer! But how do you *know*, supposing it to be a *crime*, that I *have* changed my opinion and conduct? On what evidence do you ground your accusation? You are slow to admit the authority of Holy Writ, in regard to the resurrection: you sift the evidence; you detect flaws; you take years to reach a solution; but in my case, you *leap* to a conclusion—and your conclusion is as opposite to truth and fact as east is to west. Sir, if I *had* changed my opinions I should not hesitate to avow

it; but it is untrue in every sense in which untruth can be applied to any statement, that I *have* changed either my opinions or my conduct. I have challenged many others, and I now challenge *you*, the Principal of a Theological College, to sustain your accusation, by quoting a single sentence which I ever spoke or wrote in defence of Religious Liberty, and which I have since gainsayed or retracted. I challenge you to point to a single act of my long life whose principle I have violated, or from which I have swerved to the extent of a hair's breadth! There! Mr. Tayler, I throw down my gage: take it up if you can—if you dare.

But, in this matter, I acquit you of *wilful* misrepresentation. Like many other good men in England and elsewhere, you have been deceived by a cuckoo-cry: you have listened to artful and persevering slanders; and, I firmly believe, when you read what I am about to write, that you will express your hearty sorrow for the injustice which you have done to myself and others, whom, I think, you *ought* to have known so well as to prevent your lending a ready ear to their calumniators.

The great cause, I am persuaded, of the misapprehensions and misrepresentations to which we have been subjected in the minds of even good and amiable men in England, is your total ignorance of our Presbyterian Church Government. With you, Presbyterianism is a mere name, whilst you are practically independents—*i.e.*, every congregation is a church in itself—but, with us, Presbyterianism is a reality, which I shall endeavour to explain, even at the cost of being tedious.

A number of ministers and congregations, in a convenient locality, say eight or ten, are associated in a Presbytery for purposes of advice and co-operation. Each society appoints a lay elder to represent its interests at quarterly meetings; and those elders have equal authority with the ministers in every respect. Thus, the rights of the people are thoroughly guarded against clerical usurpation; and the common interests of separate congregations are amply secured. Several Presbyteries, meeting together, constitute a Synod; and this Synod, comprising an equal number of lay and clerical members, makes regulations, after mature consideration, for the

education of our students and the good government of our churches. This association is entirely *voluntary*; and any minister or congregation may leave it, without let or hindrance, should the majority enact unpalatable laws. The chief duties of Presbyteries and Synods are the education of students and the ordaining of ministers. Students, after five years' study and countless Presbyterian and Synodical examinations, are licensed to preach. In other words, after careful literary and theological training, the Presbyteries give them a certificate of character and qualifications, on the possession of which they may be chosen as ministers. In *every* Presbyterian Church, questions as to their religious tenets have been put, time immemorial, to candidates for license and ordination; but these questions have been more or less searching, according to the disposition of the several Presbyteries. In the General Synod of Ulster, previous to the Remonstrant separation, the law permitted Presbyteries to demand absolute subscription to the Westminster Confession; or to test the candidate's "soundness in the faith," by unlimited questions. The General Synod having determined, by a large majority, to enforce a Trinitarian Test upon all candidates, the Remonstrants seceded in the year 1830, adopting the former Code of the General Synod as their rule of discipline—feeling assured that, in their new association, the power of questioning would never be abused, so as to demand of candidates for license and ordination an assent to any particular class of *doctrinal* opinions. In course of time, however, it was found that the power of Presbyteries might be abused, either by stringency, on the one hand, or relaxation on the other; and, besides, it was anomalous in a Church professing to receive the scriptures as the *only* rule of faith and duty, to leave it, even nominally, in the power of Presbyteries to violate that principle. Hence, our new Code of Discipline was enacted five years ago, after two years' deliberation, setting aside, *for ever*, the Westminster Confession—taking away from Presbyteries the power of *unlimited* questioning—and preventing candidates, in all coming time, from being asked questions, involving any peculiar *doctrinal* belief. Being a *Christian* Church, however, we resolved to put three questions only, bearing *solely* upon the *foundations* of

Christianity, and not implying any *special views* of it. A Trinitarian or Unitarian, a Calvinist or Arminian, may equally answer them. Here they are:—

“Do you believe in God?”

“Do you believe in the Divine Mission of Christ?”

“Do you believe that the Scriptures contain a Divine Revelation?”

Now, Mr. Tayler, “here is the head and front of my offending.” A perfect yell has been raised against me by designing men—some of them *half* and some of them *whole* infidels—for attempting “to impose a *doctrinal test*!” Sir, I was largely instrumental in the REPEAL of *all* Doctrinal Tests, whether in name or in reality. I helped to strike off the few remaining links of the chain we brought with us from the General Synod. No man holding *any* form of *Christian* belief can be excluded from our pulpits: our ministers and people are now free, thoroughly free, by *law* as well as by *practice*. And yet, Mr. Tayler, whilst I am entitled to gratitude and praise for the utter *abolition* of human creeds, you raise a cry against me, as “a renegade, a traitor, a Creed-maker, a persecutor, a tyrant, and an inquisitor!” Are you not ashamed, Sir, to have thought so unkindly, and to have acted so unjustly, in relation to a man who, in his palmiest days, was far less worthy of your Christian esteem than he is at this moment, when, “fallen into the sear and yellow leaf of age,” he is worn down by incessant toils and conflicts in that very field of truth and liberty which you *say* he has *deserted*?

Some, I know, are weak and wicked enough to say that we ought to ordain a man to the Christian ministry, without even endeavouring to ascertain that he *is* a Christian of *any* kind! That infidel liberalism, I never advocated, and therefore cannot have disavowed. Do *you* support it? If a Jew, a Mahometan, a Deist, or an Atheist, could cajole a Christian congregation, by liberal platitudes, to choose him as their pastor, would *you*, yourself, “give him the right hand of fellowship,” and “bid him God speed”? If you would, say so manfully; and let the world know the estimate of Christianity entertained by the “New School of Thought.” If a

congregation choose a Deist or an Atheist, I admit their *right* to do so; but if they demand of *me* to do an official act, so as to give that man a secure tenure of a *Christian* pulpit and Christian emoluments, I say, "Nay: you may palter with your own souls; you may destroy your own families if you will; but, in such Godless iniquity, *I* shall have no share."

You seem to doubt that our new Irish liberalism is designed to open the way for infidelity into our pulpits. In many cases I am sure it is not; for some good men are deluded by the cuckoo-ery of liberty; but if you knew as much as I do of some of the principal actors in our scenes—if you saw, that everything sceptical, ay, infidel, gathers around them—you might alter your views. But be that as it may, I never *have* advocated—I never *shall* advocate—that spurious liberality which would make no distinction between Christ and Belial. To our genuine, free Presbyterianism, I cling with unalterable fidelity, as that system of Church government which best secures the rights and liberties both of ministers and people. If any do not like it, they may leave it; but it is thoroughly dishonest to enjoy its large advantages, whilst basely labouring to trample upon its principles and usages.

You say, I *once* maintained "that no man could change his faith at the option of his own will," and insinuate that I have abandoned that opinion. No, Sir, I am still of the same mind: it is the doctrine of both reason and revelation: and so *practically* do I hold it, that many of my most valued friends are Trinitarians and Calvinists. One excellent and most intelligent gentleman, who is a philosophical Deist, though no scoffer, enjoys my entire confidence and most perfect esteem; but I would not put that man, estimable as he is, into a Christian pulpit. Let men be honest, let them wear neither masks nor cloaks, and I shall respect them whatsoever they believe or disbelieve; but the man who says, "You must give me Christian bread to eat, yet I am so fond of liberty that I will not tell you whether I be *myself* a Christian," has in him all the elements of a thorough knave, and "I will have none of him."

7. You sneer not a little at "the *Regium Donum*," and at "the warmth of our Irish blood," as the probable

source of the recent excitement in some of our churches. Heartily do I wish that my poor brethren in England enjoyed "the security of tenure" guaranteed by our maligned Presbyterianism; together with the humble comfort, and independence of individual and popular caprice, supplied by the *Regium Donum*. Thank God, our Irish blood is warm; we feel deeply and speak boldly; and whatsoever excitement may have prevailed among us, has been largely owing, I am sorry to say, to the influences, direct or reflected, of "Manchester New College," of which you are Principal. Those influences, happily, are becoming gradually less, as they are better understood; and if you knew the intellectual, social, religious, and moral statistics of parties here, you would be astonished at the utterly erroneous estimate which you have formed of them. Be assured, Mr. Tayler, that "all things are working together for good" amongst us: the froth is oozing out, and the wholesome liquor will be left behind. Irish Unitarianism has been frequently compromised by the well-known opinions of some who bear its name; but the incubus has, to a considerable extent, been thrown off; the process of disenthralment is still going on; the laity, though in a few places deluded by names and declamations, are sound and Christian at the core; and other Churches see that we are not a sect of semi-infidels, but of thorough Christian believers. We know quite well what we are doing; and we humbly think, that our London brethren might leave us alone to settle our own quarrels, without throwing the entire weight of their press and professorships into one scale, in a contest of which they evidently know nothing. Why, Sir, it is only two years since the influential name of *J. J. Tayler* was paraded before the world, and backed by a handsome subscription, under a pleasant heading which expressed "strong disapprobation" of Mr. Scott Porter and myself as worthless falsifiers and persecutors, "who brought forward unfounded charges affecting the character of a faithful Christian minister." You hesitate long as to the truth of fundamental Christian doctrines, but you speedily made up your mind to lend the weight of your name and purse to as great a fiction as ever emanated from *Baron Munchausen*! Sir, we were *no* false accusers; we brought

forward *no* charges; we only defended *ourselves* in a quarrel *forced* upon us, in despite of our earnest endeavours to avoid it. You have known us long and well, Mr. Tayler, and what have we done that *you* should *rush in* to defame us?

We are ready "to play bairns' play with you." Do leave us alone; don't inflame our "Irish blood;" we have both enough to do at home. I know, thoroughly, the condition of English Unitarianism; I know that its very best men, lay and clerical, are anxious to counteract the influences of your College; and I know that the real energy, and life, and glorious missionary zeal of your Churches is not of the *German type*. At the same time, I know, likewise, that the latitudinarian principles broached in your letter are, in many places, eating like a cancer into the very heart of Unitarianism amongst you. A most intelligent and worthy gentleman, in a central English county, writes thus:—"We have a flourishing Sunday-school; and we hope for the establishment, at some time, of a congregation of *Christians*, who will be content to accept and trust what is handed down to us in the Holy Scriptures, for their guidance and their creed, rather than the teachings of many of *the new lights*, springing up amongst us from London."

Such, Mr. Tayler, is the estimate of your *principles and labours*, entertained by earnest, thoughtful, pious Unitarians; and, as an evidence that "the tree is still known by its fruits," I give you the calm, admirable, anxious words of a Unitarian lady, residing in one of your most important localities—a woman than whom I know none more gentle and intelligent—than whom, I believe, there is none more excellent upon the earth. Thus speaks a noble, Christian wife and mother:—"It is high time that it should be determined whether we, who call ourselves *Unitarians*, are *Christians*, or not. There is quite too much latitude amongst us in England. Some seem to think that Unitarianism means nothing else than liberality and tolerance towards *all sects*, without any distinct belief in anything. I am surprised at the views held here by many; and I have *never* heard, in the chapel which I attend, one word about belief, or one exposition of our own doctrines! The people here would call it

controversy and sectarianism : and it is no wonder that our body is constantly losing members, who go to the Church or to other bodies—for the young *hear* no doctrine, and are *taught* none—so that, when they grow up a little, the first person sufficiently interested in religion to enter on the subject has the power of leading them into other folds. Mr. —, of whom you may have heard, goes *habitually* to church with his family, yet *professes* to be a Unitarian, and has had his children baptised by our Unitarian minister, though he never attends on his ministrations. Another gentleman attends chapel occasionally ; but considers it a terrible thing to attempt to promote our views *in any way*. He will not take a Unitarian paper, because it is sectarian ; nor allow his daughter to attend a Unitarian school, for fear she should become too *exclusive* ! Now, I think all this is very sad, and opens the door, either to infidels, or more earnest Trinitarians, who, whatsoever may be their errors, have the great advantage of believing *something* !”

Now, Mr. Tayler, the letters from which the preceding extracts have been taken came from districts widely separated, and were not written for any special purpose, but simply in the incidental intercourse of private friendship. You are personally acquainted, I am sure, with some of the parties alluded to. The *liberal minister* was your own pupil, and seems to be your own mental child ; and the *liberal gentlemen* are the sons of a Unitarian minister ! Behold your work ; “it goes bravely on ;” the heaven is spreading rapidly ; hundreds of places, I have good reason to believe, are in precisely the same condition as the two districts referred to in the extracts. Holyoake and his Secularists may soon “hide their diminished heads.” A volume of arguments exposing the mischievous tendencies of your “New School of Thought,” and “Transcendental Liberalism,” could not speak with the solemn force and the awful warning of those two extracts !

In this country, our eyes were opened to see the approaching evil—rather too late, no doubt, but still in time to awaken vigilance, to man the walls of our little fortress of Christian truth with faithful defenders, and to make our worthy people acquainted with their rights, their pri-

vileges, and their duties. We quail before famine and pestilence, which can only kill the body, but how much more terrible is the withholding of "the true bread of life," which alone can nourish the soul—how much more frightful the pestilence of irreligion! "My day is far spent, and the night is at hand;" but so long as God spares me a mind to think, a tongue to speak, or a pen to write, I shall fearlessly proclaim my ever-increasing appreciation of the priceless value "of Christ and His holy Gospel," in defiance of all clamour and misrepresentation, whether they proceed from the ignorant and worthless whom I despise, or from the enlightened and amiable whom, in spite of what I deem mournful errors, I cannot fail to honour and respect.

You tell me, however, that I can erect no barriers which will, in all cases, exclude "selfish and dishonest men" from our churches. Most true; I admit, I know, I lament it; but, because we cannot accomplish all that we *desire*, shall we refrain from doing all that we *can*? Because we may not be able, in all cases, to exclude ingenious burglars from our houses, shall we, therefore, invite them to enter by opening our doors? Because even the laws of God cannot make *all* men virtuous, shall we, therefore, say that they are of *no* use? I know that we cannot absolutely bar our pulpits against the occasional intrusion of "selfish and dishonest men," but we may keep out *some*; and should any violate their solemn engagements entered into with our people, we could easily eject "the wolves in sheep's clothing" from the folds which they hoped to desolate.

But I must have done. Your letter touched upon points so numerous and important that I have been compelled to follow you over a very wide field. *J. J. Tayler* and *H. Montgomery*, however, are but straws floating upon a mighty river which is rolling onwards to eternity: yet that Gracious Being who so frequently employs feeble agents in the carrying forward great designs, may overrule our puny labours to the awakening of serious thoughts in many minds, and the advancement of his own glory, in the diffusion of truth and holiness. Be assured, my dear sir, that my strong conviction of your unconscious errors, which, on some points, I may have too strongly

expressed, has not led to the slightest diminution of the sincere moral esteem in which you have always been held by—Your faithful servant,

H. MONTGOMERY.

DUNMURRY GLEBE, Dec. 17, 1861.

THE REVIEWERS REVIEWED.

NON-SUBSCRIBING CREED-MAKING REVIEWED, *with relation to the recent Controversy in the Presbytery of Antrim.* 1861. pp. 47. Crown 8vo.

OUR readers are pretty well aware of the nature of the recent controversy in the Presbytery of Antrim. It arose out of an application from the Congregation of York Street, Belfast, to be received under the care of that Presbytery after having left the Remonstrant Synod, because that reverend body refused to instal a minister among them without calling upon him to profess his belief in the existence of God, in the divine revelation contained in the Bible, and in the divine mission of the Lord Jesus Christ.* The immediate issue was whether the congregation should be accepted or not; the broader question which lay beyond the immediate one was, whether the Presbytery of Antrim should, in future, dispense with all tests or declarations of religious belief, as a qualification for license, ordination, or installation. The present pamphlet upholds the decision by which York Street was admitted into the Presbytery, and advocates, though not very consistently, the comprehensive measure of dispensing with all statements of belief.

It is anonymous; for though the name of "W. B. Ritchie" is subscribed to the preface, no one suspects him of being the writer; and, indeed, he signs his name as

* At the risk of being tedious, we here subjoin the three questions which the Remonstrant Synod's Code requires to be put to candidates for license, ordination, or installation. They are (1.) "*Do you believe in one God, the Creator and Governor of the universe?*" (2.) "*Do you believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament contain a divine revelation?*" (3.) "*Do you believe in the divine mission and authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, as the Son of God and the Saviour of the World?*"

"*Secretary*" to some society or committee, the name, constitution, and objects of which are not revealed. It is, doubtless, a joint-stock company for lighting up the theological darkness of the North of Ireland. But the shareholders in the concern must be poor in intellectual wealth. They are obliged to trade on borrowed capital at the very commencement of their operations. On Mr. J. J. Tayler they draw for a long letter on the resurrection of Christ, to which our present number contains a reply. From the *Unitarian Herald*—whose editors write on one side of a question which they either grossly misunderstand or wilfully misrepresent,—and will admit of no reply to their own mis-stated facts and sophistical arguments—they borrow two articles. They copy as many from the London *Inquirer*, a paper which reviles and calumniates honourable men, and then, in the true spirit of modern liberalism, refuses to insert their answer to its charges; while it opens its columns to anonymous slanderers to assail their moral and personal reputation. In short, the half of the pamphlet is made up of contributions gathered from any quarter—no matter what—from which a scrap of seeming support could be gained. Never was a more pitiable confession of intellectual poverty.

Yet, the writers did wisely in copying largely from others, for their own resources are scanty indeed; and their skill in employing those which they possess, is, perhaps, equally so. Of their capacity, in each respect, we shall give one or two specimens, and then leave those to trust in them who can.

Some knowledge of the history of the Presbytery of Antrim might reasonably be looked for in persons who write on the subject of which the pamphlet treats. The authors have felt this, and therefore they reprint, at full length, the glorious "*Propositions*" which the founders of that Presbytery submitted to the General Synod of Ulster in the year 1726. We should give them credit for great candour in reprinting this document, if it were not self-evident that *they do not understand it*; for, assuredly, it demonstrates that the Non-Subscribers of 1726 maintained the very contrary of the principle held by the Joint Stock Company; it proves that those illustrious men were very far indeed from regarding it as an

infringement upon Christian liberty, to require from candidates for the office of preaching the Gospel, a declaration of their faith in God, in Christ, and in the Bible.* But the fact is, the writers of *Creed-making Reviewed*, understand neither the drift of the "*Propositions*" nor

* As there will, probably, be frequent occasion to refer to these memorable declarations, we here reprint the second and third of the six "*Propositions*" which contain the whole doctrine of the founders of the Presbytery of Antrim respecting license, ordination, and instalment:—

Prop. II. "Candidates for the holy ministry may give *clear and sufficient evidence of their soundness in the faith*, without subscribing or professing an assent to any one imposed uninspired form of Articles or Confession of Faith; and they may as *fully satisfy their Ordainers concerning their fitness to preach the Christian faith*, without subscribing any such Confession, as they may prove their aptness to preside in the public worship of God without declaring their assent to any prescribed human Liturgy or Form of Prayer.

Prop. III. "We are humbly of opinion that the Great Head of the Church hath given no power to the Church to make any canon or religious law by which an intrant into the ministry, *who gives sufficient proof of his soundness in the faith, and of his having all the other ministerial qualifications and abilities required in the Gospel*, shall be refused license to preach the Gospel, ordination, or instalment, *merely because he refuseth to give his assent or subscription to the Westminster Confession, as the sole and exclusive test and standard of orthodoxy, and term of ministerial communion*. And seeing Christ himself hath neither made, nor given any power to others to make *any such law*, it ought to be treated and considered by all persons affected by it as null and void in itself. And it is the duty of ministers to license, ordain, and instal, upon a regular application, *all who are qualified according to the Gospel*, any pretended law or canon of any Church whatsoever to the contrary notwithstanding."—*Seven General Synods*, p. 186-7.

Here, then, while the necessity of subscribing "any one imposed uninspired form of Articles" (such as the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England) "or Confession of Faith" (such as that of Westminster), is expressly denied—the obligation of candidates to give "*clear and sufficient evidence of their soundness in the faith*," and to "*fully satisfy their Ordainers concerning their fitness to preach the Christian faith*," is expressly admitted; and, at the same time, the propriety of refusing license to any one who does not give "sufficient evidence of his soundness in the faith" is distinctly recognized. All that is contended for is, that such evidence may be given otherwise than by "subscription to the Westminster Confession as the sole and exclusive test of orthodoxy." And it may serve to show how far the divines of the modern school are from really approving the principles laid down in the foregoing propositions, to mention, that, when one of them was distinctly read over in the debate on the motion for receiving the Congregation of York Street under the care of the Presbytery of Antrim, one of the leaders of the majority denounced it as "*Papery! rank Papery!*" Yet these men declare that they stand up for the principles of the Non-Subscribers of 1726! Do they mean that they stand up for "*Papery?*"

the object for which they were drawn up. On the latter point they have fallen into a blunder, so gross and palpable, that we doubt not it will appear to many incredible. They entitle these "*Propositions*" the "*First Expedient for Peace*, offered by the Non-Subscribers to the General Synod, in June, 1726." Now, these six "*Propositions*" contain the entire creed of the Non-Subscribers, on all the points which had been agitated between them and their opponents, during the "seven years' war," which ended in their expulsion from the Synod. And the writers of *Creed-making Reviewed*, believe evidently, for they assert plainly, that men so sagacious and clear-headed as Abernethy and Michael Bruce, Haliday and Kirkpatrick, were silly enough and impudent enough to propose, as a condition of peace, to the majority of the Synod of Ulster—consisting, as it did, of men who had repeatedly declared their determination to adhere to the law of subscription to the Westminster Confession of Faith—nay, as their very "first expedient" for peace, that the members of that majority, constituting nine-tenths of the whole body, should, on the spot, agree to discard their own deeply-cherished principle, and adopt that of Non-Subscription in all its length and breadth! Who but idiots, dolts, and fools, could have acted a part so senseless and absurd? The founders of the Antrim Presbytery never conducted themselves in a manner so preposterous. They pleaded with their brethren for a toleration or indulgence; and to shew that their principles were not such as to disqualify them from being tolerated, they thought it right to state their views explicitly, which they did in these six "*propositions*." But they never asked their subscribing brethren to adopt these principles, much less did they offer them as "*expedients for peace*." To offer such terms as conditions of peace, would have been equivalent to a declaration of immediate and eternal war. It is evident, therefore, that not one of the authors of *Creed-making Reviewed*, has read, understandingly, the *Narrative of the Seven General Synods*, from which these "*Propositions*" are copied. In that volume, the founders of the Antrim Presbytery complain bitterly of some members of the General Synod who misrepresented their "*Propositions*" as if they had been offered

as an expedient for peace. They assert, and with unnecessary prolixity prove, that this was either a gross misconception, or a wilful perversion of their meaning. They truly say that no one who had read their paper carefully over, could have fallen into such a blunder;* and we believe them. But this proves convincingly that the authors of *Creed-making Reviewed* have never read attentively the "*Propositions*" which they pretend to adopt. So much for their knowledge of past history.

Nor are they a whit more successful in dealing with facts of recent occurrence. They affirm,—speaking of the Remonstrant Synod during the first twenty-seven years of its existence,—that, "neither at ordination nor at installation, during this period, were catechetical questions put to test the doctrinal opinions of candidates, and that it was not till the year 1856, when the 'New Code of Discipline' was introduced, that ever the subject of a formal examination of candidates on theological points was mooted." (P. 6.) This would be very strange, if true; for the Old Code of Discipline, which was in force during all that time, absolutely required the candidate to answer one very stringent question respecting his belief, and authorised the Presbytery to put as many more as they pleased. But Mr. Alexander, of Newry, has shewn that the assertion is untrue. In one of his admirable letters to the *Inquirer*, he declares that at his ordination he was asked ten or a dozen doctrinal questions: innocent ones, it is true; but still relating to religious belief. The writer of this notice was present at the ordinations of the Rev. W. J. Blakely, in York Street, Belfast; the Rev. John Montgomery, in Newtownlimavady; and the Rev. J. Nixon Porter, in Carrickfergus; and can testify that at each of them, a considerable number of theological questions was asked—on one occasion, indeed, far more than he thought necessary; and doubtless a similar report could be given of other ordinations at which he was not present. The very reverse of the

* It may be convenient to place here the very words in which the Non-Subscribers make this assertion. "Had they" (*i.e.*, the framers of the overture for a breach of communion) "carefully read our paper they could not have fallen into so plain a mistake as to allege that our *terms of peace* are contained in our *propositions*." (The italics are as in the original. See *Narrative of Seven General Synods*, &c., p. 231.)

statement in *Creed-making Reviewed*, would probably be much nearer the truth. *It was not till about the time of the compilation of the New Code, that any one appears to have thought of objecting to the right of the Synod or the Presbytery to put as many questions as it pleased, to candidates for license or ordination.*

As in great things so in small. The authors of this pamphlet assert, that "at the late Ballyclare meeting the walls were placarded with handbills, headed "*Infidelity Exposed.*" (P. 10.) The object of this statement evidently is to cast odium on those who were present at that meeting and took part in its proceedings. But be the object what it may, the statement does not contain one word of truth. No handbill of any sort or kind was placarded on the walls at that meeting. As a matter of course, the *Inquirer* has paraded this audacious fiction before its readers; but we can assure ours that the assertion of the anonymous pamphleteers is, as a whole, and in all its parts, an absolute untruth.*

And as is the historical fidelity of the junto who who have sent out this pamphlet, so is their logic. Of this also we shall give a few specimens.

Through nine-tenths of the pages which proceed from their own pens, the writers declaim against all sorts of

* I take this opportunity of explaining an allusion in my speech at Ballyclare, which, though well understood by the audience to which it was addressed, may be obscure to dwellers at a distance. I said some of the ministers in the majority which had excluded Mr. Dundee from his right of voting, were '*only fit to lecture on the foot of a fly.*' I referred to a sermon which was preached by the Rev. John Hall, one of that majority, to his people, on a certain occasion, when they were assembled to partake together of the Lord's Supper. In this discourse, he minutely explained to the intending communicants, the means by which a fly is able to walk freely on a pane of glass, or the under surface of the ceiling. In the same sermon there was a passage describing the pleasure felt by a mouse while the cat is playing with it, previous to the last fatal spring. This discourse made a very deep, but by no means a favourable impression on the minds of the people. Among others, Mr. John Rowan, now of Belfast, was so disgusted with it, that, having obtained the preacher's MS., he brought it to the Rev. Dr. Montgomery, requesting him to read it carefully (which of course he did), and to consider whether steps might not be taken to relieve the congregation from a minister so utterly void of common sense. It is needless to say, that, as the discourse contained nothing either anti-Christian or immoral, Dr. M. entirely discountenanced Mr. Rowan's proposal. This Mr. Rowan is now one of Mr. Hall's warmest supporters. *Tempora mutantur!*

tests, creeds, or professions of faith. This is the staple of their discourse, the burden of their song. In almost every page they declare their hostility to tests. And having laid this broad principle down as the very basis of religious freedom, *they end by proposing a test!* Nay, they are not satisfied with *one* test; they offer *two* for our acceptance. First, they are willing to allow the candidate to be tested as to his "*mere Christianity*" (p. 19): or, in the words of their great leader, Mr. Maginnis,—that he should be required to "*profess himself a disciple of Christ.*" (P. 20.) Now this is a *creed*,—a *test*,—a *doctrinal* declaration,—of the very same class, and liable to the very same objections, with the Questions in the Remonstrant Synod's Code, against which they hurl such bitter denunciations! The other test, proposed by these enemies of all tests, is contained in the following sentence: "What, then, are the principles of Church Government for which we contend? We answer, with the first Reformers, *The Sufficiency of Scripture, and the Right of Private Judgment.*" (P. 16.) And assent to this, according to their idea, is abundant proof of the candidate's Christianity. This, at first sight, appeared to us a very fair and moderate proposal. But unfortunately there is a note which lets us into the secret of their reason for approving of this creed. "The merest tyro in history knows that '*the Sufficiency of Scripture,*' in the sense used by the first Reformers, and since, means nothing more than a standing protest against the assumption of infallibility in its interpretation by the Romish Church." (P. 16. n.) Very good. "*The Sufficiency of Scripture,*" according to these writers, is a doctrine to which Voltaire, Hume, and Thomas Paine might have declared their assent (for they assuredly denied the Church's infallibility): and, such being the case, it includes all that a Christian Church should expect or require in the men whom it sets apart to preach the Gospel! This is "*mere Christianity*" with a vengeance!

But let us do Thomas Paine justice; for with all his aberrations, he was an honest man. He would have scorned to avail himself of the subterfuge which our modern casuists are so eager to provide for his followers. No earthly inducement would have prevailed on him to enter a Christian pulpit as a preacher of the Gospel,

declaring that he "*accepted the Holy Scriptures as a sufficient rule of faith and practice.*" He would have scorned such hypocrisy; for, with all his aberrations, *he was an honest man.* At present, however, we are not concerned with the morality of this pamphlet, but with its logic. It is sufficient to point out that it denounces all creeds: that then it proposes a creed: that it offers this creed as a sufficient test of the candidate's "*mere Christianity:*" and concludes by asserting that it could be subscribed by any one who rejects the Pope's infallibility: a category which includes Deists, Atheists, and Infidels of every class!

Nor are the unknown confraternity a whit more successful in their attack upon the tests proposed by others, than they are in explaining or defending their own. We may illustrate this by reference to their assault on the *Three Questions* in the Remonstrant Synod's "*New Code.*"

Their great objection to these Questions is that they constitute a *Creed*. "It is simply absurd to talk about these questions being designed to test a candidate's Christianity *only*; they contain a doctrinal and theological creed." (P. 20.) A little farther down they state what is the nature of a creed:—"Creeds do not tolerate either vagueness or generalities." (P. 21.) Of course, then, the three questions do not tolerate "either vagueness or generalities." And yet, *on the very same page*, they have a laboured argument to shew that these questions could be *conscientiously* answered in the affirmative, not merely by a Trinitarian, an Arian, or a Humanitarian (which is true), but by a Deist or a Mahomedan! "It must be evident that these tests would be no safeguard against the entrance of *Deists* into the Church. The Deist could *conscientiously* (!!!) answer these questions." . . . "It is further evident that a *Mahomedan* would not be kept out of the Church by reason of these tests." (P. 21.) Observe the beautiful sequence and harmony of these assertions. Creeds admit of *no vagueness or generalities*. But these questions are *so vague and so general* that they can be answered not only by Christians of all sects, but by Deists and Mahomedans. *Therefore they are a creed.* Admirable logicians!

We have given more space to this trashy production than it is worth, but great value seems to be attached to it. It has been prepared, apparently, by the united

wisdom of a number of persons; it has been lauded in the columns of the *Inquirer*, which faithfully quotes *two* of the many false statements which it contains, and makes one of them an argument for depriving the Remonstrant Synod of the Royal Bounty; and a great deal of money must have been spent in forcing it into circulation. As the public were not likely to purchase a tract so worthless in every sense, it has been sent round in basket-fulls to the houses of persons who neither wished nor cared for it. As many as three and four copies have been left at one door. Not only so, but the "Elder" who represented the Congregation of York Street at the last meeting of the Presbytery of Antrim, actually travelled to the town of Antrim, in company with a fellow-labourer, on the day when the funeral sermon of the late father of the body, the venerable Mr. Carley, was to be preached. With sheaves of this pamphlet under their arms, containing a deliberate attack on the principles which that venerable man held dearer than life—principles to which he bore his testimony by the very last act of his life—that elder and his companion took their stand at the gate, and in the vestibule of the meeting-house, while the whole of the respectable inhabitants of Antrim were flocking into the building to shew their respect for his memory and their regret for his loss—and they thrust into the hands of all who would accept them copies of this vile and virulent assault on his principles, and on his character and consistency as a minister of Christ. It was as if they had spat upon the tomb where his body lies in the adjoining burying-ground. The time was when our congregations sent forward to the judicatories of the Church, men grave, highminded, judicious; circumspect in their behaviour, and careful to give none offence—men like I. W. Glenny, J. H. Houston, L. Dobbin, and James Andrews, sen. But times are altered now, and we must bear the alteration as we may.

We have called this production worthless: and such it is where its authors speak in their own persons. But this censure does not apply to the pages at its close, in which are given a number of extracts from speeches and sermons by Dr. Montgomery. These are truly excellent, and deserve to be held in perpetual remembrance. Such is, we

feel assured, the conviction of the public at large; and we trust that Dr. M. will find time to re-issue those speeches and discourses, in a collected form, for the gratification of his numerous friends and admirers, and to the confusion of those who assert, or insinuate, that he has,—in standing up for a profession of faith in the truth of the Gospel, as the vital principle of a Christian church,—departed, *in any degree*, from the doctrines of his youth and early manhood.

J. S. P.

INTELLIGENCE.

MEETING OF THE PRESBYTERY OF ANTRIM.

ON January 1st, this reverend body held its quarterly meeting in the Second Presbyterian Meeting-house, Belfast, the Rev. W. Bruce, Moderator, in the chair. The Rev. J. Scott Porter, Clerk, called the roll. Two elders (Dr. Blain and Mr. W. J. C. Allen) appeared from the First Congregation, Belfast—which is a collegiate charge; and two also from Holywood, each claiming to be the regularly appointed elder. After a lengthened discussion,—in the course of which it was shewn that collegiate charges in the Synod of Munster and in the General Synod of Ulster had been represented by two elders, and that the First Belfast Congregation had been similarly represented when the Presbytery of Antrim sat with the Synod of Ulster, and as a constituent part of the Non-Subscribing Association,—it was resolved, on the motion of Dr. Ritchie (elder), seconded by Mr. E. Gardner (elder), that but one elder be present from any congregation of the Presbytery. Mr. W. J. C. Allen, one of the elders from First Belfast, then retired, and Dr. Blain remained a member of the court.

In the case of the Holywood congregation, Mr. Gardner stated that he held in his hand a memorial from the congregation of Holywood against the appointment of Mr. A. McDowell, as being unfair and illegal, and claiming that Mr. H. N. Smith be recognised as the elder. He stated that the Rev. Mr. McAlester had acted most tyrannically at the meeting of his session and committee, having occupied the chair, and refused to put a motion for the appointment of Mr. H. N. Smith. He moved, therefore, that Mr. H. N. Smith be received as elder from Holywood. Dr. Ritchie seconded the motion. Mr. Gilbert Mulligan supported the allegations of Mr. Gardner, and represented the conduct of parties in Holywood as most disgraceful. Mr. Murland moved an amendment, that, as the Holywood congregation was so divided on the matter, no elder should be received; and this amendment was seconded by Mr.

M·Kittrick. It appeared, on inquiry, that the memorial which had been represented to be from the Holywood congregation was only from Mr. Smith himself; and Mr. M·Alester entered into an explanation of the whole matter, shewing that he was justified in occupying the chair, and bound to take it—and, farther, that he declined to put the motion for Mr. Smith's election, inasmuch as he was not an elder of the congregation, never had been, and never pretended to be one, and therefore was not eligible. Mr. T. B. Johnson read the minutes of the meeting of session confirming Mr. M·Alester's statements, and Mr. A. M·Dowell was recognised as a regularly elected member of the court.

After a lengthened discussion respecting the elder to be received from Ballyclare, the election of Mr. Dundee was confirmed, and a resolution, moved by the Rev. John Porter, was adopted, to the effect that the Rev. S. C. Nelson and the Rev. C. J. M·Alester be appointed to meet with the congregation of Ballyclare and endeavour to restore harmony, and that they have power to call in an umpire.

The Clerk then read the minutes of the last quarterly meeting and the late special meeting of Presbytery, also three protests against recent decisions of the body, viz.—one against the rejection of the second elder from First Belfast; one against the rejection of Mr. Dundee as elder from Ballyclare; and one against the admission of York Street Congregation. Mr. Nelson stated that he would send in a replication to the first and third of these protests, and Mr. Moore to the second.

A letter was read from the Rev. John Jellie, accepting a call from the York Street Congregation; and Mr. Nelson moved that arrangements be made to instal him.

Mr. M·Alester here drew attention to a motion of which he had endeavoured at an earlier stage of the proceedings to give notice, but had been interrupted, and sought that a special meeting be held for its consideration before any installation should take place. The following was the motion:—"That, whereas recent events, in connexion with the Presbytery, have caused serious apprehension in the minds of some members that candidates for license, ordination, or installation may be accepted, although they should not believe in the Holy Scriptures as containing a divine revelation, or in the divine mission and authority of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God and the Saviour of men; we do hereby declare, in order to remove such apprehensions, and clearly exhibit the scriptural character of our Church, that to license, ordain, or instal any candidate without being fully satisfied, by his own explicit declaration, or by his answers to questions asked, that he believes in Christ's divine mission and authority as the Son of God and the Saviour of men, and that he believes the Scriptures to contain a divine revelation, would be an obvious dereliction of our Christian duty—a clear violation of the principles on which the Presbytery of Antrim was founded—an open departure from the usages hitherto observed on such occasions, and an utter unfaithfulness to the trust reposed in us, of training or sanctioning persons as duly qualified to instruct our people in the fundamental principles of the Chris-

tian faith; and that we have no intention, nor do we mean, to license, ordain, or instal any candidate without being fully satisfied as aforesaid."

The Rev. J. SCOTT PORTER would willingly second Mr. Nelson's motion if Mr. M'Alester's resolution were first carried.

This proposal raised a perfect storm of indignation. The clamour was deafening.

Mr. M'CALMONT (Elder for York Street)—If that resolution were passed, the York Street Congregation would not remain in connexion with the Presbytery for a single day.

Rev. S. C. NELSON—Mr. Porter insinuates that we are not Christians. At Ballyclare, too, I was grossly misrepresented by him.

Rev. J. S. PORTER—I defy you to prove it. I challenge investigation.

The Rev. C. J. M'ALESTER read his motion, and said that, if passed, he would willingly join in installing Mr. Jellie afterwards.

Hereon occurred an indescribable scene of confusion. The most opprobrious epithets were hurled against Mr. M'Alester.

Dr. W. B. RITCHIE (in an excited voice, and with frantic gestures)—I appeal to you, as a gentleman, did you not promise that your resolution would not be brought on to-day? You have broken your word. You would have taken advantage of my absence to carry your resolution had I not happened to be here. Your conduct is deceitful and ungentlemanly.

A VOICE—It is another specimen of Holywood trickery.

Rev. C. J. M'ALESTER—I am sure Dr. Ritchie, when he reflects calmly on the circumstances of the case, will see that I could have no wish to take any advantage of him.

Rev. JOHN PORTER—Really it is too bad, Mr. M'Alester. You have not behaved like a gentleman. But such trickery is of a piece with your conduct of late. You have been going about day after day stabbing us all in the dark, and the object of your present motion is to blacken us and whitewash yourself.

Rev. C. J. M'ALESTER—I am sorry Mr. Porter has expressed himself in this way, and trust he will, on reflection, withdraw these offensive observations.

Rev. S. C. NELSON—Mr. M'Alester's motion is an insinuation against Mr. Jellie.

Rev. J. SCOTT PORTER—If Mr. Jellie's name is in any way associated with the resolution, it is not the mover's fault, but Mr. Nelson's.

Mr. MURLAND—There is no one of us who could not answer these questions. It would be a shame if we could not.

Mr. GARDNER—Mr. M'Alester's motion is an insult to every one of us.

Rev. C. J. M'ALESTER—I mean no insult, but should be glad to have an opportunity, either now or at a special meeting, of discussing my motion.

Mr. MURLAND—But you are not going to get it.

Mr. GARDNER—He wishes to hold himself before the world that he is a Christian and that we are not—that we want to undermine the Christian religion. It is a perfect insult to us all. I call upon

Mr. M'Alester to remember the solemn words of his Saviour, "Lord, in thy name we have done wonderful works." What is his answer? "Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity." Where are there greater workers of iniquity than the Rev. Mr. M'Alester, the Rev. John Scott Porter, and Dr. Montgomery! (Order, order.)

The Moderator, with much difficulty, succeeded in restoring order, and the amendment having been pronounced by him informal, the motion for installing Mr. Jellie was carried by a large majority.

Mr. M'Alester was urged to bring his motion forward, as no special meeting would be held for its consideration, and he then proceeded to explain the grounds of the apprehension expressed in the resolution he had submitted, and expressed great regret that an opportunity was not given for its full discussion. He stated that he had never charged either the York Street Congregation or any of his co-Presbyters with unbelief, but he did feel most painfully that the principles advocated by many of his brethren would open their Church for the admission to its ministry of those who recognised no divine mission in the Saviour, and no divine revelation in the Holy Scriptures. It was wrong to say that the course he now took was different from that he had formerly pursued. He defied any one to point to any act he had done, or any sentiment he had uttered, at variance with the views he was now urging. His apprehensions were not of recent growth. Years ago he had become uneasy, and he reminded them of the efforts he had more than once made in the Presbytery to have their principles more distinctly defined. These efforts had led some to say most unjustly that he desired to introduce a creed. His apprehensions were much increased by the admission of the York Street Congregation, for the ground on which they left the Remonstrant Synod was, that they would not allow their minister to be questioned respecting his belief in Christ's divine mission. He further referred to a portion of the English press that was regarded as the exponent of their leading opinions, and said that the tone of the articles which from time to time appeared there did much to increase his anxiety. He thought that the adoption of such a motion as he now laid before them would do much to promote their best interests as a free Christian Church. He besought them carefully to consider it. The unjust and offensive expressions that, in a season of excitement, had been used towards him would, he hoped, in a calmer hour, be retracted. If his motion was carried he would understand his position in the Presbytery; so he would if it be rejected, or by a vague amendment put aside. The subject was entitled to their grave consideration, and he trusted it would receive it.

The Rev. J. S. Porter would have seconded the motion, but as the hour was late, and many members of the Presbytery had left, he desired the subject to be considered at a special meeting. Mr. Mulligan, in order to have the matter decided, seconded it; and Dr. Ritchie, without any remarks beyond one sentence of disapproval, proposed the following amendment:—"That the Rev. C. J. M'Alester's motion, containing unwarranted and unfounded accusations against his co-Presbyters, be rejected with indignation."

He added, amidst applause and laughter—"That is an amendment with a vengeance." Mr. Gardner seconded this amendment in a speech in which he referred at much length to matters that had no bearing on the question, and concluded by saying that Mr. M'Alester's motion should be scouted with indignation.

Mr. J. SCOTT PORTER said—Before the vote is taken, I wish to offer a few remarks. In doing so, I will not follow the example which has been set me, of bringing into this Presbytery matters that occurred outside. Now, Sir, the motion is, that it would be inconsistent with Christian duty—inconsistent with the recognised principles of the Presbytery of Antrim—inconsistent with the fundamental principles of our Church—with the precepts heretofore observed on such occasions, if the Presbytery were to accept and to send forth to the world, with our sanction, any man who denies the fundamental principles of Christianity—that he believes in God—in Jesus Christ as the Saviour of the world, and in the Scriptures as a true and divine revelation. We are asked, on the other hand, to ordain or instal, as a fit and proper person to be employed in preaching the Gospel, one of whom we have received no satisfaction as to his belief in God, in the Son of God, or in the Bible which tells us of a God and of the Son of God. The amendment sets out that the motion contains unwarrantable and unfounded insinuations against Mr. M'Alester's co-Presbyters, and should be rejected with indignation. Well, now, Sir, I cannot say that I disapprove of the form in which this amendment is brought forward, because it is my opinion that, when things are bad, it is far best they should be very bad. It is my opinion that, when an amendment is brought in for the purpose of getting rid of a solemn, useful declaration on the part of the Presbytery of Antrim—and this amendment is brought forward for the purpose of getting rid of that—it should be one that speaks the *animus* of its proposers, and carries its answer upon the face of it. This amendment, Sir—intemperate declaration of an intemperate man—calls upon the Presbytery to scout the motion of Mr. M'Alester in a way that speaks for itself. In all that has been said in support of the amendment, there has not been one word said to shew that the motion of Mr. M'Alester is inconsistent with the principles of the Christian religion, and I am not surprised that the gentlemen who have spoken in opposition should have held their tongue upon that point. What answer has been given to that motion? None whatever. I do not deny that, in the Presbytery of Antrim, at installation or ordination these questions may not have been put. I do not say that every minister ordained has been asked in explicit words, "Do you believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God and the Saviour of the world?" or, "Do do you believe in the sacred Scriptures as containing a divine revelation?" but I say that, in the Presbytery of Antrim, every minister ordained has given an explicit declaration of his belief in the cardinal and fundamental principles of our religion. The question might be fairly rested on two grounds—first, the authority of Scripture; and, secondly, the declarations of their Presbyterian ancestors. If any person did not like the Presbytery, an open course was open to them—they could

leave it. The practice of the Presbytery had been agreeable to its principles. He defied any person to bring forward an instance of any person having been installed without first making a declaration of his faith. It may not have always been in answer to questions asked, nor did the motion say that that should be the case in future. It provided the alternative—either the minister could give a declaration, or the necessary questions could be put. Mr. Porter went on to enforce the passing of the resolution, and against the passing of the amendment. The passing of the resolution would restore harmony, and would make the Presbytery willingly instal Mr. Jellie; the passing of the amendment might lead to consequences such as they did not foresee.

Dr. RITCHIE—Put the amendment to the meeting, and let its mind be known.

Rev. J. S. PORTER—It is unnecessary to call the roll.

Dr. RITCHIE—(mockingly)—Call the roll.

Mr. MULLIGAN—By all means call the roll.

SEVERAL—The roll, the roll!

[It should be explained, that the greater number of Mr. Scott Porter's supporters, not anticipating this discussion, had left the meeting.]

Rev. J. S. PORTER—I have no objection that it should be stated that the motion was carried by a large, an overwhelming majority.

VOICES—The roll, the roll!

The Rev. J. S. PORTER then proceeded to call the roll, and whenever he came to the name of one of his own absent supporters, Dr. Ritchie, who was planted right before him, exclaimed, in a mocking tone—*Deserted!* and thus called forth derisive peals of laughter from his party.

On the roll being reckoned there appeared, for the amendment, 12; against it, 4.

On the motion of the Rev. S. C. NELSON, seconded by the Rev. C. J. M'ALESTER, it was agreed unanimously that a resolution of condolence should be sent by the Presbytery to the widow and family of the late Mr. Carley, of Antrim.

The proceedings terminated about seven o'clock.

MOIRA REMONSTRANT CONGREGATION.—On the 9th ult., this worshipping society held a soiree, in their Meeting-house, at the close of Mr. Standfield's singing class for the season. Notwithstanding the severity of the weather, the house was filled with a large and highly-respectable assemblage, consisting of Christians of all religious denominations in the vicinity, including the Rev. W. H. Wynn, rector of the parish, and his family; the Rev. Samuel Graham, of the Presbyterian Church in connexion with the General Assembly; and the Rev. James Black, of the Methodist connexion. The chair was occupied by the Rev. Dr. Montgomery, the expectation of whose presence had mainly attracted such an attendance, and whose ability in presiding contributed most essentially to the gratifying manner in which the entire proceedings passed off. The Rev. C. J. M'Alister opened the meeting with prayer; and, after tea, a number of interesting and important sentiments were spoken

to by the clergymen present. During the evening, the choir sung several pieces of music in a very effective and pleasing manner. Such a meeting must have afforded Mr. Mulligan and his congregation a flattering proof of the goodwill of their brethren of other churches, and is most creditable to all, as a display of harmony and Christian feeling.

UNITARIAN YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION, BELFAST.—In connexion with this Association the Rev. J. Scott Porter is delivering a course of lectures on Ancient English Literature, on alternate Tuesday evenings, which are well attended. On Tuesday evening, the 14th inst., Dr. Young, United States Consul for Belfast, delivered a lecture in connexion with the same Society, on the Chemical History of Carbon, tracing it from the diamond, its most valuable formation, down through all the conditions which it presents in the mineral, vegetable, and animal kingdoms. A vote of thanks was cordially passed to the learned lecturer.

ENTERTAINMENT AND ADDRESS TO REV. J. JELLIE.—On Tuesday evening, the 14th inst., the teachers of the Moneyrea Sunday-School entertained their pastor, the Rev. J. Jellie, previous to his removal to Belfast. After tea Mr. Joshua M'Master was moved to the chair; and a gratifying and well-deserved address was read by Mr. Fletcher, to which Mr. Jellie replied in feeling terms.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

WE regret that so large a portion of our first number is occupied with matters more or less connected with the unhappy controversy that now agitates the Non-Subscribing Churches. While our desire is to uphold the doctrine of Christ's divine mission, as the rock on which the Christian Churches are built, and to meet the attacks which, in one form or another, are made against this fundamental truth, we are particularly anxious that *The Christian Unitarian* shall be found acceptable to all from its devotional and practical tone, and the variety of its intelligence in connexion with the Unitarian and other denominations.

"P."—The word "Non-subscription," in the title of Mr. Haldy's pamphlet, referred to in Mr. M'Alester's Statement, is obviously a misprint for "Subscription." The full title is "Reasons against the Imposition of Subscription to the Westminster Confession of Faith as a Term of Church Communion."

"A Voice from the Past" has been received.

We are most reluctantly compelled to hold over for next number a lengthened and interesting obituary of the late Rev. James Carley.

Communications for the Editor, to be addressed by post to Rev. C. J. M'Alester, Holywood; or, otherwise, to 28, Arthur Street, Belfast.

Orders for the work and business communications to be sent to the Agent of the Society, 28, Arthur Street.

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NON-SUBSCRIPTION.

CHRISTIAN UNITARIANISM is our bread of life, Non-Subscription is our bond of Church union; this is the charter of our freedom from human control, the other is the fruit of our Christian liberty. What is Non-Subscription? It were a shame if we had the answer far to seek. We have been calling ourselves by this name for many a day, and our fathers before us rallied under this banner in many sharp conflicts. The Remonstrant Synod was born under its folds, and the Presbytery of Antrim, in its own centenary, welcomed its infant brother to share the heritage of Non-Subscribing freedom; and yet we need not say—tell it not in Gath, for it has been told, and the Philistines rejoice—instead of marching with closed ranks, as were fit for a small band surrounded by enemies, we are for the moment scattered into alienated groups, seemingly not at one as to the meaning of the inscription on our flag. This puts us upon the inquiry, What is Non-Subscription?

Like many other designations, its meaning is to be ascertained, not by its etymology, but by its history. The Puritans of the seventeenth century are called Non-Subscribers by Neal; but in their case, Non-Subscription to the discipline of the Church of England was simply because they thought that discipline not Scriptural. They neither objected to subscribing themselves, nor dreamed of not imposing subscription on others, provided the thing subscribed and imposed was their own interpretation of Holy Writ. The struggle was, not that there should be no creeds, but whose creed should be imposed on all.

As it became clear that all hope of being able to enforce their own doctrine and discipline was gone, their Presbyterian descendants in England, after the Revolution, generally abandoned all tests—save acceptance of the Scriptures—of which change we have the sign in their open trusts. A similar movement took place in the Church of England, of which Archdeacon Blackburne's "Confessional" was the fruitless manifesto, and a kindred feeling spread in Ireland, of which came the Presbytery of Antrim. It was then that Non-Subscription received its second development, and, as an ecclesiastical designation, came into general use, implying not merely refusal to subscribe or conform to the doctrine and discipline believed to be contrary to Scripture, but to allow the right of any Church to make binding on its members even those views of divine truth which they admitted to be the true meaning of Holy Writ. But, as in the first stage, Non-Subscription, or Nonconformity, implied a readiness to conform and subscribe to a Church embodying their own interpretation of Scripture; so in the second stage it as clearly implied, in its rejection of all authoritative interpretations, subscription to the Bible itself. Then arose the war against creeds. By "creeds" they understood not anything a man believes; not his belief in God, in the Scriptures, and in the divine mission of Christ, but simply the different interpretations of Scripture which the Churches authoritatively imposed, under penalty of excommunication. Are these words, "creed" and "Non-Subscription," to receive a new and third development of meaning? We can conceive of a "Church of the Absolute," casting aside every thing historical and external, book or person, refusing to acknowledge Christ as Master and Lord, and subscribing to nothing but the soul's own inspirations; but we should be surprised if it cared or claimed to be called Christian.

Our enmity to Creeds and attachment to Non-Subscription only bind us closer to the Bible as the record of God's revelations, and to Christ as our Lord and Master, from whose teachings there is no appeal. "The words that I speak unto you are not my own, but his that sent me." "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, Jesus Christ." We know what we mean, then, by

“Creeds” and “Non-Subscription,” just what our fathers, now fallen asleep, and our living leaders meant, and we adopt to the full, as they adhere to, all their glowing words. It was an evil day when men lost faith in the sufficiency of Scripture as the bond of Church union, and ceased to acknowledge in each other the right of private judgment in the interpretation of God’s Word. But where is the harm, some one may say, in creeds? Seeing that there are such diversities of interpretation, why may not any man put forth his creed, and say, that is my interpretation. He may do so with great propriety and convenience; but if a Church does so, the creed becomes a hindrance against any fresh light, a snare for weak consciences, a mask for dishonest ones, and an instrument of cruel persecutions. And they are this moment lying a nightmare on the freest and best minds in the great Churches of Christendom. Therefore, we say, no creed but the Bible. Glad at all times to make a declaration of our belief, ready to give an answer to every one that asketh of the hope that is in us, we, at the same time, adopt the principle as a Church, that Holy Scripture, as the record of God’s revelations, is the true and sufficient bond of union. Christ our Master, and all brethren.

Such is our position with regard to Creeds. It is one not always well understood by other Churches. They think there can be no Church without a creed regularly drawn out, binding in all its details on every member, and not finding such in our Church, they proceed to hold our whole body accountable for anything and everything any Unitarian at any time or any place may have written. We answer we have no creed, in your meaning of the word. We go for the waters of life, each with his own pitcher, to the fountain of Nazareth. If we are told, as we are by controversialists, that this is very inconvenient, as they never know what to attack, we can only say that higher considerations than their convenience have led us to adopt this principle, by which, as we think, better than in any other way, are the interests of truth, freedom, and charity cared for.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AS IT MIGHT BE.

It is Sunday morning—the hour of meeting in the Sunday School is drawing on, and the children may be seen entering the school-room. There is cheerfulness in their countenance—nothing of the anxiety that sometimes too plainly appears as they repair to the Day School, and of the fear that they may be punished for not having the appointed task prepared; and nothing of rude, boisterous conduct which on other days may be observed. There is no gloom, but a cheerful calmness of manner and deportment that seems to harmonize with the peaceful day of rest. The teachers, too, may be seen entering: they take their places on the several forms, and the pupils of the different classes take their seats beside their respective teachers. By this arrangement, any tendency to levity among the children during the exercises at the opening of the school may be repressed. As the clock strikes, the superintendent is seen at the desk, and immediately begins to call the roll, in order that he may ascertain what children are absent. It is not necessary that the superintendent should be the minister of the Church. Where the minister can act in that capacity it is well, and it affords him the best opportunity of knowing the children of his flock—their characters and dispositions. But a minister may find that the occupations of the Sunday School, by fatiguing or perplexing his mind, unfit him for his pulpit duties; and in such a case he should husband his strength, and be satisfied with an occasional visit to the school. The roll being called, the superintendent gives out a hymn, two or three verses, in which every effort should be made to induce the children to join: a simple and very brief prayer follows, suitable to the capacity of the children, and bearing directly on the objects for which they have met. The school being thus opened, the superintendent announces the subject of a lesson which he has prepared for the whole school, and which, by way of distinction, we shall call the General Lesson. It may be an outline of some narrative in the Old Testament history, as the call of Abraham, the history of Jacob, the eventful and touching story of Joseph

and his brethren, the early life of David, or the story of Naaman the Syrian. It may be some impressive incident or some touching lesson from the life of our Lord—the feeding of the five thousand, the stilling of the tempest, or the raising of Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha; the parable of the prodigal son, so beautifully setting forth God's love for the sinner, and the efficacy of repentance for the pardon of our transgressions; or the parable of the good Samaritan, powerfully rebuking the bigotry of the Jews, and illustrating the divine truth, that mercy is better than sacrifice; or it may be the scene of the Saviour's apprehension in the garden, or the crucifixion on Calvary, or his resurrection from the dead on that first day of the week, which has since been made, in its hallowed hours, commemorative of that glorious truth of the Gospel; or it may be a portion of the teachings, the labours, or the sufferings of Peter, or Paul, or the disciple whom Jesus loved; or it may be a fragment of the early struggles of the Christian disciples, exhibiting the privations to which they were subjected, and contrasting therewith the blessings and the privileges which we enjoy. Or, again, it may be the importance and necessity of prayer, as enforced by our Lord's teachings and illustrated by his example. It may be the duty of obedience to parents, subjection to teachers, honesty, truthfulness, justice, or mercy. Or, carrying the lamp of Christian truth into the great theatre of nature, how many objects there are that may fitly be made the subject of Sunday School instruction—a flower, a bud, an insect, a star, the human frame, a single organ of that frame, the laws of health, and the Christian obligation of observing them. How rich and varied the themes that from Sunday to Sunday may be taken up! While events that occur in the neighbourhood—some sad calamity—some sudden and startling death—may be made the means of arresting the attention and impressing the hearts of the children.

The general lesson may be extended to *twenty minutes*, not more; for it seems a great mistake to address children in lectures as long as you would deliver to adults. The teachers then take charge of their several classes, which should be as far removed from one another as the space will permit. To the particular lessons *thirty minutes* may

be given; to keep the pupils longer seems to be injudicious, as the patience becomes exhausted, and the attention necessarily flags. But in order to employ so short a time advantageously, and make the most of it, it is necessary that the teacher should have made careful preparation of the lesson which he means to teach; that he should have considered the several points in it, and the illustrations or parallel texts by which he means to explain it. If he depends on the moment to teach his class he will often find himself perplexed; the attention of his pupils will fail; his time will be wasted, and most probably his temper put to a severe trial. Nor will the teacher be satisfied to prepare each lesson as it chances to arise; he will arrange a series of lessons, extending over several weeks or months, so that each may follow the other in natural succession, and he will not be puzzling himself to know what lesson he shall prescribe for the next Sunday. In this manner, also, he will be able to observe the progress of the class, and the several subjects that have been taken up or omitted, and thus, in the course of two or three years, a systematic acquaintance with the Gospel, and the branches of knowledge that bear on it, may be acquired. When the children are young, each class will consist of very few, four or five at most, as it is difficult for a teacher to give proper attention to more; but of elder pupils twice that number may, without inconvenience, perhaps with advantage, compose one class.

At the expiration of the half-hour the pupils and their teachers take their places on the appointed forms; a hymn is sung, another brief prayer is offered, and thus the school is closed. The children leave in regular order, not jostling and pushing one another, but quietly dispersing. The whole business has not occupied more than an hour and a quarter. The time for public worship approaches, and all the children, except the very young, accompany their parents and friends to the church. The school has not been so irksome or so protracted as to unfit them from attending worship, and care should be taken never to make the Sunday School a substitute for public worship. Much has been plausibly said and written against children being too much occupied with religious services on the Lord's-day, but we do not think that such

a length of time as we have specified for the school, and a service of an hour and a-half in the church, with a little breathing time between, will be found too much for children who have passed beyond mere infancy; and experience has led to the general belief that it is most important to accustom children early in life to frequent the house of God.

But the Sunday School teacher has not discharged his duty when he has made careful preparation from week to week, and regularly met his class on the Sunday. He will seek to know his pupils beyond the school-room,—to visit them in their homes,—to understand their advantages, their temptations, their struggles,—to win their confidence and affection, and thus to impress their character, and quicken a spirit of piety and love in their souls. And in endeavouring thus to imbue the minds of our pupils with right sentiments, what a strong motive we gain to have our own minds thus imbued. Few will be found so hypocritical as to labour earnestly to awaken sentiments of truth and piety in the hearts of others, while they themselves are the slaves of unbridled passions. “Mercy,” said the great dramatist, “is twice blessed; it blesseth him that gives and him that takes;” and so is every good and Christian work; so is the earnest effort of the Sunday School teacher; it tends to benefit and bless the young for whom he labours; and though he should often fail in his endeavours, it will surely bless himself, in kindling within his own soul a more fervent piety, and causing his character and life to be pervaded with a more Christian spirit.

MEN, in general, cannot now endure to think that their own narrow church holds all the goodness on the earth. True; much intolerance remains; its separating walls are not fallen; but, with a few exceptions, they no longer reach to the clouds. Many of them have crumbled away, till the men whom they sever can shake hands, and exchange words of fellowship, and recognize in one another's faces the features of brethren.—*Channing.*

ORIGINAL POETRY.

HARTLEY COLLIERY.

“DEAR WIFE, good bye! I'll return at night,”—
 And the miner went his way,
 In the deepening gloom that precedes the light
 Of the dawning winter day:
 From each cottage home his companions come,
 While at every open door
 Some loved one stands, for whom toiling hands
 Shall work and toil no more.

With jest and song they tread along,
 And descending, one by one,
 They sink in the gloom of that living tomb,
 And their earnest work's begun.
 While toiling there, in the close, foul air,
 Their thoughts are far away,
 With the mothers and wives who live their lives
 In the gladness of upper day.

But hark! what a din! aye! tumbling in
 Comes the weight of that iron beam!
 And torn away falls the loosened clay,
 Closing each fissure and seam.
 With mute lips they stand, that devoted band,
 And the ruddy cheek turns pale,
 For well does each know he's too deep below
 For human aid to avail.

God help the men! for never again
 As long as the sun may shine,
 Shall the light or love, from the world above,
 Cheer one in that fatal mine.
 God help them there! as they kneel in prayer,
 For other help there's none;
 On the things of the past they have looked their last,
 And eternity's begun.

God help the women! who then and there
To the widowed homies shall go,
And with blanched cheek tell how the great beam fell,
And buried the men below.
What ear can bear the shriek of despair,
The scream of a madd'ning woe,
When the tidings spread that the loved are dead,
Or dying where none can go?

God prosper the hands of the noble bands
That work through the night and day,
Without thought or care for the poisoning air
That comes through the burying clay!
In vain! all in vain! Ah! the aching pain,
When hope hath expired at last,
And the sad tale's told, and the dead and cold
Are carried home at last.

Oh! what can solace a grief like this,
And what can bring relief
To the heart that has seen its life of bliss
Crushed down by so dread a grief?
To the Queenly palace and miner's cot
Death's fatal shaft hath sped;
And women weep o'er their lonely lot—
Weep for the loved—the dead.

Ah, dreary Time! on thy leaden wings
There may come a dull relief;
But 'tis not to thee that the spirit clings
In its hour of bitter grief:
The balm must flow and the peace must come
From the hand that dealt the blow—
From the God who calleth our loved ones home—
To that home where we sigh to go.

J. B. L. A.

HE who does a bad' deed says, more strongly than words can utter, "I cast away a portion of future good; I resolve on future pain."

THE MOTIVES OF OPPOSITION TO CREEDS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CHRISTIAN UNITARIAN.

DEAR SIR,—I cannot but think that, in the controversy at present distracting our Church, which, it must be remembered, is only a part or development of that which commenced in the year 1857, and has been more or less before us ever since, many lessons of wisdom which the history and the experience of the past should alike have taught us, have been neglected or forgotten. One of these, at least, it is the object of this letter to bring before your readers, leaving it to those most interested to consider and apply it as they may think right.

We should have to go far back indeed into the records of the past to trace the earliest opposition to creeds and church formularies of faith. It will suffice for my purpose, however, to advert, in the first place, to the origin of the English Non-Conformists in 1662, which is to be commemorated in this, its bicentenary year, by so many English churches. I entertain no doubt of the sincerity of the glorious 2,000 Presbyterians, in their self-sacrificing opposition to the Act of Uniformity, or when declaring that their refusal to conform was grounded on its interference with their liberty of conscience and their right of private judgment; but, at the same time, I believe that their opposition and refusal proceeded chiefly from a still more powerful motive, which *allied* itself to the love of liberty, and prompted them, through it and in its name, to do and to suffer, viz.: disbelief of some, at least, of the doctrines and Articles of the Church of England.

How many were, consciously or unconsciously, leavened with the doctrines of the venerable John Biddle and his co-religionists, it would be hard to say; but no doubt many of them were: and the growth and spread of *Unitarianism* from that date, among them and their descendants, furnishes strong presumptive evidence of the fact.

On the other hand, the more rigid Presbyterians, the former supporters of the Westminster Confession of Faith,—was it not their *Calvinism* that, invoking the

name of liberty to its aid, tore them from the bosom of the Church? Let the establishment of the Independents, and other Calvinistic sects, from that source and period, bear witness! And so with any other sects that trace their origin to the Non-Conformists of 1662. Have any remained, either in doctrines or forms, coincident with the Church which they left?

Similarly, the Dublin Non-Conformists of the period left the heritage of their *doctrinal* bias to their successors and descendants; and Calvinistic and Unitarian settlements there have respectively attested the fact.

And now, to come to the formation of the Presbytery of Antrim in 1726. Dare it be hinted that those good men and true, who separated from the Synod of Ulster, and founded the Presbytery of Antrim, were influenced by any other motive than the love of liberty and the adherence to the principle of Non-Subscription? Notwithstanding the eloquence of Holmes and Curry, and of the many who have so stoutly maintained their perfect singleness of aim and motive, have we grounds for conjecturing that some beams of "*new light*" may have penetrated their minds, and some of the dangerous spells of *Arianism* may have worked on their imaginations, softening the rigors of Calvinism, and preparing them more stedfastly to maintain, and more fully to enjoy, their new-found freedom? It would seem so. For, whatever may have been their profession, and, on the whole, their belief *before* their separation, "several of them, almost immediately afterwards, are well known to have avowed Arian and Arminian opinions." Add to this the whole doctrinal history of the Antrim Presbytery from that time to the present, and the tendency, at least, of its founders' belief and teaching must seem very evident. It resulted *universally* in the establishment of Arian or Unitarian Christianity as the doctrine of their Churches.

Far be it from me to blame these excellent men for acting from *two* motives instead of one, especially when both were so praiseworthy; but I contend that their case supplies another proof that some doctrinal question generally lies behind that of liberty of conscience itself, and is the more powerful principle of action of the two, urging us on, whether consciously or unconsciously to ourselves,

even though the circumstances of the war may lead us to place "Liberty" and "Non-Subscription" as the motto on our banner.

And how does the Remonstrant separation affect the position I have advanced? It confirms it in every particular. Seventeen ministers separated from a Trinitarian and Calvinistic Church, distinctly on the ground of freedom of conscience and Non-Subscription to human creeds, and on that ground alone (although several of them at the time acknowledged themselves Arians, and all proposed to sign any creed drawn up in the words of Scripture); and what was the result? The immediate establishment of a distinct Church Association, openly and universally professing Unitarian and Arminian views, by which, though forming no part of their Synodical constitution, they have even since been distinguished.

From this we learn—

1st. That in all these, and similar cases, it was a difference growing wider and wider, on great points of *faith* and *doctrine*, no less than their desire to preserve their *liberty of conscience*, that finally led to the separations which took place.

2nd. That the abstract question of liberty, alone and unsupported by any ground of doctrinal distinction, has never been strong enough to disunite a Church, *or to found one in its place*.

3rd. That the *doctrinal* distinction, though concealed, purposely or unintentionally as may be, for the time, will soon be sure to manifest itself and become the real basis or bond of union of the new organization.

4th. That this *doctrine*, which, whatever it be, is always the distinguishing faith of the Church which adopts it, has come down to us, in ever-growing simplicity, through Romanism and Anglicanism, through Calvinism and Trinitarianism, till we now have it in the Scriptural faith of Unitarian Christianity; and in its simplest form, in the three questions of the Remonstrant Code of Discipline, inculcating belief in God, in Christ, and the Scriptures.

5th. That the *next step* for those who choose to take it, in the name of liberty though it be, *must be to something less than this*: what, it is not my province to say.

Shall I shrink from applying these conclusions to the

late proceedings of the Presbytery of Antrim, and that strange *amendment* passed by the majority to Mr. M'Ales-ter's resolution, whereby they have practically taken the theory of pure, absolute liberty as their sole foundation, and "rejected with indignation" the confession of Christ's divine mission from the most solemn proceedings of their Church? Let them look to themselves! Let laity and clergy alike awake, ere it is too late, to a sense of their responsibility, lest, judging of the future by the past, the mover of that proposition be found a true "prophet of evil," and it become to them, indeed, to use his own words, "an amendment *with a vengeance*."

I remain, dear Sir, faithfully yours,

A VOICE FROM THE PAST.

[There is much truth in the foregoing letter; but we are sure that our respected correspondent will agree with us that Creeds, by which we mean human interpretations of Scripture, are very objectionable, even though they embody the opinions of those who adopt them, when they are made terms of Church communion, as they interfere with the authority of the Scriptures, and check free inquiry.—ED. CH. UN.]

CHRIST IN OUR BEREAVEMENTS.

THERE is one gate which is open for all—it is that of the tomb. There is one visitor that comes to our door, and enters whether we will or no—it is death. These earthly ties must be broken, and whatever else may befall those we love, we must bear them, or be borne by them to the grave. The aged head bows down, the little child sinks into the slumber that knows no waking, and manhood, from the midst of its cares, goes home from the sunshiny and crowded streets and lies down to die. There may or may not be joy in the world; it is certain there will be sorrow. How shall the griefs of life be met? You strive in vain to steel yourself against them. The dear faces that are gone startle you at every turn. You would not be insensible, and so lose the blessed though painful memories of the treasures you have lost. There is a better way than that which turns grief into a hardness of heart. Christ says: Come to me and I will give you rest. I will teach you a truth which shall make memory

a blessing, because over against it is set an immortal hope. I will teach you a submission which draws down strength and comfort from above. He does not dry up human tears, but he takes out of them their bitterness. He makes death minister to faith in God and immortality. He teaches you how to dwell with the living on earth, so that you may hope to dwell with them hereafter. He would purify and exalt the affections. He not only soothes grief, but would ennoble it. He would make affliction sacred and sanctifying; and no one ever followed him, dwelling with the living as he teaches, mourning for the dead as he teaches, in trust and faith, but has afterwards been able to say—It is good for me to have been afflicted. “He giveth his beloved sleep,” we read. Ah, more than this! While they wake in their mortal sorrows, he giveth his beloved rest!—*E. Peabody.*

RECENT INSTALLATIONS.

IN our present number we give, as fully as our limits will justify, a report of two installations which recently took place in the Presbytery of Antrim; and the services on those occasions may be regarded as representing the two sections into which, unhappily, that ancient and venerable body has been divided. It would be difficult for one unacquainted with the recent controversies to perceive any material point of difference between the two parties; but a few sentences may make it sufficiently plain. One party contends that it is the duty of the Presbytery to be satisfied of the competency of the candidate for license or ordination to preach the Gospel, before they sanction his undertaking such an office, and that it is incumbent on them for this purpose to receive from him a declaration of his Christian faith, and evidence of his knowledge of the Gospel. The other party holds that the Presbytery have no right to know the views of the candidate—that it is enough for him simply to acknowledge the Scriptures as his rule of faith, and that it is the right and duty of the congregation alone to inquire respecting his Christian principles.

There is no doubt that the position taken by the father

of the Presbytery,—the Rev. William Bruce,—and those who are joined with him, is that which the founders of the body held. In their Second Proposition they clearly expect that the candidate shall satisfy his ordainers concerning his fitness to preach the Christian faith; and that he shall give clear and sufficient evidence of his soundness in the faith. And Mr. Haliday, one of the founders of the Presbytery, and prominent in maintaining and defending its principles of Christian freedom, says, “it is not his opinion that a man, barely by subscribing the Bible, can give to his ordainers sufficient evidence that he has carefully read and considered that sacred Book; that he understands and is qualified to teach the doctrines contained in it.” And he adds, “It would be to me a much more satisfying proof that a man is apt to teach the doctrine contained in the Bible, if in his own words he would draw up a short abridgment of that doctrine, than if he would subscribe to the words of the Bible.” It is easy to see from these passages that the venerable men who founded the Presbytery did not for a moment conceive that they had no business to inquire respecting the Christian faith of the candidate, and that at an ordination they were merely to attend “as a court of order and of assistance.” Yet such is the opinion expressed by the minister who lately performed the installation service in York Street: and in the solemn language of prayer, which seemed to be irreverently employed “as a vehicle of distraction,” he besought our Gracious Heavenly Father that “he would change the hearts of those who contend,—in accordance with the original principles of the Presbytery, and with the principles of common sense besides,—that ministers should know the fitness of those whom they ordain for the duties they undertake, and that “He would break this yoke of human authority and pride, and restore peace to their weeping Zion.”

We find in the various publications connected with the controversy in 1726, and earlier, the term *soundness in the faith*, frequently employed, and we have this expression explained at the York Street installation, to signify nothing more than the acknowledgment of the sufficiency of the Scriptures, and the right of private judgment! And, if this be so, then it follows as a necessary conse-

quence, that any minister who, in the exercise of his private judgment, arrives at the conclusion, that the Gospel narratives are little more than traditions, that have, in a rude age, gathered round the life of Jesus of Nazareth, and that the miracles are only the offspring of superstition—the resurrection of Christ himself being only a fable—are perfectly sound in the faith and competent to fill Christian pulpits ! It is plain, from the language of the Propositions of 1726, so often referred to, that such was not the loose meaning attached to the phrase at that time, for they speak of candidates “giving clear and sufficient evidence of their soundness in the faith.” And Mr. Halliday distinctly says, that a man may not give sufficient evidence by merely subscribing the Bible. And thus it is plain that the explanation now given in York Street of this familiar phrase, is not that which our Presbyterial ancestors would have given, but is a modern reading employed to meet the requirements of the present enlightened age. The sufficiency of the Scriptures—a term which has memorable and stirring associations in connexion with efforts for ages against human creeds and human authority in religion—has recently been so sublimated in its meaning as to denote only “a standing protest against the assumption of infallibility in its interpretations by the Romish Church,” thus exhibiting only the negative side, and ignoring the positive aspect which they present in their divine authority, and casting into the shade the blessed truths, the precious consolations, and the glorious hopes which God has revealed in their sacred pages.

In this controversy there may be much waste of argument, and great misconception, from the various meanings attached to the words “Bible” and “Scriptures.” In Protestant Churches, in the one extreme, we find those who feel themselves bound to believe every word in the canonical books, aye, every syllable in our authorized version ; and, in the other extreme, we may find those who regard only as Scripture the sublime moral precepts and the simple and beautiful revelation of God’s unity and fatherhood, rejecting everything miraculous and supernatural. We are sure that both these extremes greatly err ; but while so vague ideas are attached to the word Bible,

how different on the part of each is the watchword—"the Bible, and the Bible only." Our position is, we think, correctly expressed in the following passage from a tract on the present discussion, published two or three weeks ago :—" Our Non-Subscribing Church is planted on the Bible, as the only rule of faith. The very reception of it as our foundation principle implies the Divine authority of its revelation ; and it is only when we find those who claim to be of our body saying that the Scriptures are ' fallible and uninspired,' and teaching that the miracles are fables, and the supernatural in Christianity a delusion, that we step in and say, ' Hold, gentlemen ! you are taking away the groundwork of our Church. We will not require you to believe in every portion of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, as contained in our authorised version ; critics have disputed the genuineness and authenticity of certain parts, and the verbal inspiration of any part is untenable ; but satisfy us that you do not regard the Scriptures as ordinary books, but that you believe them to contain a Divine and precious revelation ; satisfy us that you do not regard Christ as a *mere man*, but that, whatever be his nature, you receive him as divinely sent for the instruction and salvation of men, and we will give you the right hand of fellowship, and welcome you as fellow-labourers in the vineyard of the Lord.' Is that not freedom and liberality enough ? Those who want more have little business in Christ's Church."

As far as we understand the mind of those who have taken the conservative side in this question, their desire is in no degree to lessen, but, if it were possible, to enlarge the religious freedom which they have inherited as a precious legacy from their ancestors ; but, at the same time, to guard the Church from the intrusion of any ministers who do not acknowledge the divine mission and authority of Christ. They conceive that the principles advocated by their opponents tend to sweep away this restriction. Suppose that a man, intellectually and morally well qualified for his office, were a candidate for one of our pulpits, and that the congregation desired him for their minister, but that his religious opinions were identical with those of the late Mr. Parker, or of Mr.

Conway, a Unitarian minister in Cincinnati, would they, in accordance with their interpretation of our Presbytery's principles, consent, "as a court of order and of assistance," to ordain him? An affirmative answer to this inquiry would more distinctly mark the position we think they have taken; a negative reply might do much "to restore peace to our weeping Zion."

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN THE REV. DR. MONTGOMERY AND THE
REV. J. J. TAYLER.

OUR readers are already aware that a correspondence has been going on for some time between the Rev. Dr. Montgomery and the Rev. J. J. Tayler, Principal of Manchester New College, London, on the Resurrection of our Lord, arising out of an incidental reference made by Dr. Montgomery to Mr. Tayler's peculiar views on this subject. Mr. Tayler wrote a letter in vindication of his opinions, which was printed in the Appendix to "Non-Subscribing Creed-making Reviewed," not that it bore on the controversy now agitating us in Ulster, but because it seemed, in the mind of those who compiled that medley tract, to cover Dr. Montgomery with ignominious defeat. That tract was scattered broadcast through all our congregations, and we therefore regarded it as only fair that the other side should be heard; and in the first number of *The Christian Unitarian* we published Dr. Montgomery's reply, at the expense of *sixteen extra pages*, and to the exclusion of other articles which should have appeared. We believe, however, that our friends will feel obliged to us for having given them that able letter, exhibiting, as it does, the vigour of thought and eloquence of diction which characterized our venerable friend in the prime of life. Two letters have since appeared in *The Inquirer*, one from Mr. Tayler, and a rejoinder from Dr. Montgomery. And while he and those who sympathize with him have too much reason to complain of the one-sided part which *The Inquirer* for some years has taken in our local discussions, we have reason, in this case, gratefully to acknowledge its kindness, as, when the first half of Dr

Montgomery's letter had been marred and mutilated by neglect in the printing, it reprinted it the next week with the remaining half, thus giving with accuracy, and, we doubt not, at some inconvenience, the whole letter, occupying *fourteen* columns, in a single number.

The question at issue between the two Professors is not respecting the resurrection of the human body : on that subject there has been much diversity of opinion among Christians of all churches. "Flesh and blood," we are told, "cannot inherit the kingdom of God." When the Apostle speaks of a "spiritual body" there seems to be a contradiction in terms ; that which is "spiritual" is not "bodily," in the ordinary meaning of the words ; and we fail to reach to any clear apprehension of the nature of the existence that awaits us in the future life. Perhaps the leading opinion among Christians has been happily embodied in the paraphrase on 2 Cor. v. 1 :—

"We know that when the soul, unclothed,
Shall from this body fly,
'Twill animate a purer frame
With life that cannot die."

The controversy has reference simply to the resurrection of our Lord, Mr. Tayler maintaining that his body was not resuscitated, but that his spirit only was manifested to the disciples,—rendered in some way "objective" to their senses ; and Dr. Montgomery contending that the Scriptures sanction no such theory, but plainly declare over and over again that Christ's actual body was restored to life. We are at first surprised that any question could have arisen on such a point ; for are we not expressly told that his body was raised ? Did not loving disciples go on the Sunday morning to embalm the body, and then found it gone ? Did not Christ eat and drink with his disciples afterwards ? Do spirits eat and drink ? Did he not remove the incredulity of Thomas by asking him to touch his body ? And did he not say, at another time, when the wondering disciples feared that he was a spirit, "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself ; handle me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have." And would not the enemies of Christ, in order to refute the faith of his followers in

his resurrection, have produced his body, and exposed their credulity? In order to uphold Mr. Tayler's theory, the greater part of the Gospel narratives that mention the resurrection of Christ must be set aside as mere fables; and if, to meet the doubts of one and another, many portions of Scripture,—and those especially to which our hearts cling as embodying the most precious truths,—are to be expunged by German criticism, what reliance can be placed on the sacred records, and what becomes of our great Protestant motto—the “sufficiency of Scripture!” Admit the miraculous, as Mr. Tayler himself distinctly does, and the difficulties that perplex him, seem to us entirely to vanish. We can surely no more doubt the resurrection of Christ than that of Lazarus; and the change that may have taken place in the Saviour's body at his ascension, is not more difficult to conceive than the miracle at Caña, or the feeding of the five thousand in the desert. Granting the miraculous element, we see no difficulty; but we see a most important end to be attained by the resurrection of our Lord's body, and his mingling again for a time with his disciples. Their faith was strengthened; the fact of his resurrection, thus palpable to their senses, was the great pillar on which they rested the truth; and hence we find this fact pervading all their preaching both to Jews and Gentiles.

An extract or two from each of the letters may be sufficient to exhibit the state of the argument.

Mr. Tayler thus expresses his views:—

“I have endeavoured to determine a fact from the evidence of Scripture itself, by balancing against each other texts of apparently different import; and I have nowhere asserted that a bodily resurrection was incredible. But two conditions must unite to procure acceptance to any miracle—preponderant evidence and the perception of some valuable end which it is fitted to accomplish. Both these conditions in *my* view, though not in yours, are wanting to the resurrection of Christ. . . . Now, I have stated repeatedly—indeed, it is the fundamental postulate of my whole conception of Christianity—that I *do* believe in a ‘risen Christ’—in an attested transference of the unaltered personality of Jesus from the earthly to a heavenly life. I believe it in the same sense in which it was believed by the Apostle Paul. His conversion, with the effects that followed it, is the starting-point for my belief in the superhuman of Christianity. If he was deluded or an impostor,—if the evidence which satisfied him of a risen and glorified Christ, and which made the resurrection to him, however inexplicable by us, an unquestion-

able reality, is to be put on the same level with the spirit-rapping and table-turning of modern fraud and folly,—I must, of course, submit to the same imputation, but shall contentedly take my place in the same class of believers with the great Apostle; but if he, as I believe, was the witness of a truth and a reality, then is Christ risen from the dead, and neither his preaching nor our faith is in vain. To my own mind, if the direct dealings of God with a human soul ever carried with them unanswerable evidence—if miracle in the widest and noblest sense was ever to be believed—it was in the case of Paul, whose mysterious conversion from unbelief to belief has left such deep and uneffaceable traces on all ensuing history, breaking through the barriers which would have kept Christianity a Jewish sect, and opening a way for it to become the religion of the world. I claim the name and privileges of a Christian on the terms laid down with the utmost clearness by Paul himself (Rom. x. 9): ‘If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in *thine heart*, that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.’”

Dr. Montgomery refers to the passages in the Gospels which distinctly affirm the resurrection of Christ’s body, and then adds—

“You have not, at least in words, denied the authority of these plain Scriptures—you have not brought forward a single text even plausibly to contravene them: and yet you strangely accuse me of disingenuously ‘bringing forward evidence on one side of the question only!’ What else *could* I do? There is *no* evidence on any other side—as even you have been compelled to admit. You say, indeed, that you feel difficulties in the literal narratives of the Scriptures—that there are a few obscure passages which you cannot reconcile with them: and then, instead of interpreting the *obscure* by the *distinct*, you boldly reject the authoritative, unmistakeable words and acts of Jesus and his followers, and over-ride them by a theory of your own, unsupported by a single text, and as irrational as any speculation that ever emanated from a human brain!

“You admit my proposition, I am glad to perceive, that ‘an immortal spirit could not die or be buried.’ Very well: what then is a resurrection? Every school-boy knows that it means *the raising up* of something which had fallen—the restoration of something which had been injured or destroyed. We perfectly know what was meant by the resurrection of Lazarus, and the restoration to life of the son of the widow of Nain: we know that the bodies, the veritable bodies which died, were actually reanimated. Do you deny these facts, accompanied as they were by such beautiful and affecting circumstances? If not, how do you *venture* to limit the power of ‘God, with whom all things are possible,’ with regard to the bodily resurrection of his well-beloved Son? You say, ‘that you believe in a risen Christ as much as I do;’ but, according to your own admission, this is merely an *assertion* directly opposed to *fact*. The *spirit* of Jesus, you allow, could not *die*, was not *buried*, and, consequently, could not have been *raised from the dead*! Your

phantom resurrection, therefore, was an *impossibility*; and your strange, pertinacious efforts to impose it upon the world are as melancholy as they are contrary to Scripture, to common sense, and to all the recognised usages of language."

He thus comments on Mr. Tayler's quotation of Paul's language in Romans x. 9 :—

"I should scorn to impute to you the unworthiness of seeking to evade a difficulty, or to cast dust into men's eyes, by using a *form* of sound words, whose obvious and literal meaning you reject in your heart. I do not accuse you; and yet I solemnly declare that I am utterly unable to comprehend your mode of construing language, if you conceive that the verse which you have quoted from Paul does not, in the plainest and most express terms, directly contradict your delusion of the merely spiritual resurrection of our Lord. *What* did God raise from the dead? Doubtless, *that only* which had *died*—the crucified *body*. You have admitted that Christ's 'immortal spirit did not die,' was not *buried*, and, consequently, could not have been *raised*. There *was not*, therefore, and there *could not* have been, a resurrection, as you have asserted, of any visible 'objective spirit;' and, according to your theory, there was no resurrection of a body, for, as you aver (I do not say profanely), 'the flesh, bones, and other bodily integuments of Jesus are still mouldering in the soil of Judea!' On your own showing, I place you in this dilemma: the *body* of Christ *was not* raised from the dead, his *spirit could not* have been raised; therefore there was no resurrection of Jesus of *any kind*; and yet you say you 'believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead!'"

A portion of both letters is occupied with extraneous matters, some of them of a personal kind, which we have not space to notice. The principal subject seems to have been discussed with sufficient fulness: each party has put forward his views and the arguments by which he sustains them, and we presume the correspondence is closed.

It is a false idea that religion requires the extermination of any principle, desire, appetite, or passion which our Creator has implanted. Our nature is a whole, a beautiful whole, and no part can be spared. You might as properly and innocently lop off a limb from the body, as eradicate any natural desire from the mind. All our appetites are in themselves innocent and useful, ministering to the general weal of the soul. They are like the elements of the natural world, parts of a wise and beneficent system, but, like those elements, are beneficent only when restrained.

INTELLIGENCE.

THE PRESBYTERY OF ANTRIM.

ON Tuesday, the 4th of February, a Special Meeting of the Presbytery of Antrim was held in Belfast, to make arrangements for the installation of the Rev. James M'Ferran, as successor to the late Rev. James Carley, in the Congregation of Antrim. The members present were, the Rev. William Bruce, *Moderator*; the Rev. J. Scott Porter, *Clerk*; the Revs. S. C. Nelson, J. Porter, H. Moore, D. Watson, C. J. M'Alister, John Hall, and D. Gordon: together with Mr. E. Gardner, Elder, from Downpatrick; W. B. Ritchie, from Second Congregation, Belfast; James Orr, from Newtownards; Thomas George, from Antrim; and Robert Gordon, from York Street, Belfast. Messrs. M'Ferran and Jellie, the ministers-elect of Antrim and York Street, being present, were invited to sit and deliberate with the Presbytery, and complied.

The Committee having charge of the Congregation of Antrim, reported that Mr. M'Ferran had received and accepted a unanimous call to the pastorship of the Congregation of Antrim: and Mr. George, the Elder from the Congregation, stated that it was the wish of the people that his installation should take place on Wednesday, the 12th inst., which was agreed to. The Rev. Classon Porter was appointed to preach. It was then proposed that the Moderator should install Mr. M'Ferran; but Mr. Nelson thought that, as the senior minister of the Presbytery, it would be more desirable that the Moderator should deliver the charge to the minister and people. This was at once agreed to.

The Rev. H. MOORE immediately moved that "the Rev. S. C. Nelson be appointed to install Mr. M'Ferran."

The Rev. J. SCOTT PORTER said he had reason to know that the appointment of Mr. Nelson to take any part in the installation would be exceedingly unacceptable; and that it was the unanimous wish of the Session and people that he (Mr. Porter) should have a prominent part assigned to him in the services of the day: he therefore moved that he (Mr. P.) should be appointed to install.

Mr. THOMAS GEORGE, the Elder from Antrim, declared it to be the unanimous wish of the Congregation that Mr. J. Scott Porter should take a prominent part in the services.

The Rev. S. C. NELSON said that if he were unacceptable to any part of the congregation of Antrim, it was owing to the false statements made at Ballyclare by Mr. John Scott Porter himself; and he was desirous of being appointed to officiate, that he might have an opportunity of disabusing the minds of those who had been misled by these misrepresentations. He added that as the Presbytery was divided into two sections, it was but fair to appoint representatives of each to appear on its behalf on this public occasion.

The Rev. C. J. M'ALESTER said it was true that the members of the Presbytery were divided in their sentiments; but it was equally true that the same division existed between different congregations;

some siding with the majority in this body, others with the minority. The people of Antrim took part with the minority, and wished for the services of ministers holding those views which they approved; and he thought it would be wrong to force ministers upon them whom they did not desire. He knew the supporters of the original motion could carry it if they pleased; but he hoped they would rather adhere to the example which they had themselves set in the case of the installation in York Street. The whole of the arrangements had been left to them; and they had not invited any minister connected with the minority to take part. Of this he did not at all complain, as the York Street people were all adherents of the majority; but he thought the same rule should be applied to Antrim which adhered to the minority.

The Rev. JOHN PORTER said that the members of the minority had been invited to the installation of Mr. Jellie and had declined; which made a difference.

Mr. M'ALESTER said he had received an invitation to be present at the installation, but not to take any part in the proceedings, and he had not declined it.

Mr. JOHN PORTER said he had understood that some who had been asked had declined.

Mr. J. SCOTT PORTER said he had been invited to be present at the installation, but not to take any part in the service; and he had not declined. He said he had before denied Mr. Nelson's charge of misrepresentation, and had challenged him to prove it before the Presbytery, by bringing a formal accusation, which Mr. Nelson had not thought proper to do: he could now only repeat the contradiction and defiance. He thought, moreover, that Mr. Nelson's desire to introduce such topics into the pulpit at Antrim ought to be a sufficient reason to prevent the Presbytery from sending him thither. He admitted that the members of the majority had it in their power to nominate whom they pleased; they had the giant's strength; it was for themselves to consider whether they would use it like giants. They could, if they pleased, refuse to send to Antrim the man whom the congregation wished: they might send one who was known to be unacceptable to the people: they might set their heel upon that congregation and trample it in the dust: but let them remember that if they did so, they treated that people as no other had been treated since their Presbytery was formed. They might find that they had drawn the cord of authority too tight, and that it would snap: perhaps when Mr. Nelson went down, he might find that there was no one for him to install; and he put it to the majority to consider with what consistency they could stand up as advocates for the rights of congregations, after trampling on the wishes of the old and respectable congregation from which their Presbytery took its name.

Mr. MOORE said that it was possible Mr. Porter might be mistaken in supposing that the Antrim people were unanimous. In other congregations there was a difference of opinion, for example, in the First Congregation, Belfast.

Mr. J. SCOTT PORTER admitted that there was a difference of opinion in his Congregation, as there was also in the Second Con-

gregation, and in that of York Street, from both of which members had withdrawn; but he believed that of Antrim was perfectly unanimous.

A MEMBER then proposed that the names of Mr. Nelson and Mr. J. Scott Porter should both be withdrawn, and those of some ministers who had not taken any prominent part, and who would be offensive to neither party, such as Mr. Gordon, be substituted.

Mr. GEORGE protested against this arrangement.

Mr. M'ALESTER said Mr. Gordon had taken a very decided part in the discussions, and had made a long speech on one side, for which also he had voted on every occasion.

Mr. JOHN PORTER said that if he knew on what principles Mr. Scott Porter intended to conduct the service, he might be disposed to vote for him, provided his way of doing so were satisfactory.

Mr. J. SCOTT PORTER said he felt it would be right to answer that question explicitly. If appointed to install Mr. M'Ferran, he would conduct the service exactly as the service at his own installation in Belfast had been conducted, on which occasion he had been asked, "whether he believed the Divine Revelation contained in the sacred Scriptures, and accepted the same as his rule of faith and practice;" and having answered this in the affirmative, he was then called on to make a statement of his religious views.

Mr. JOHN PORTER said that this was a very innocent procedure, and he, for one, was quite satisfied that Mr. Scott Porter should be appointed to install Mr. M'Ferran. Some other members expressed themselves to the same effect, and, in fine, Mr. Scott Porter was unanimously appointed.

Mr. W. B. RITCHIE congratulated the Presbytery on finding that they were of one mind after all.

The Presbytery then adjourned.

YORK STREET CONGREGATION, BELFAST.—INSTALLATION OF THE REV. JOHN JELLIE.

On Wednesday, the 5th February, the Rev. John Jellie, lately of Moneyrea, was installed to the pastoral charge of the York Street Congregation, vacant by the removal of the Rev. D. Maginnis to England. All the ministers of the Presbytery of Antrim who supported the admission of the congregation into its connexion were present. The Rev. Hugh Moore conducted the introductory religious services. The Rev. D. Gordon preached from Matt. xix. 21. After some introductory remarks, he gave examples of men in different ages who had endured much in the cause of truth; and dwelt particularly on the history of Martin Luther, who, with the Bible for his only creed, proclaimed the great Protestant principles—liberty of conscience and the right of private judgment. He then went on to defend the course which the majority of the Presbytery of Antrim had lately taken in refusing to be bound by a creed made by fallible man.

The Rev. S. C. NELSON proceeded to instal the new minister. He asked, in the course of his address, whether he should insult the understanding, or doubt the honesty, or question the sincerity of the congregation or their pastor by asking them whether they be-

lieved in the Saviour whom they strove to follow, or in the Scriptures which they took "as a lamp to their feet and a light to their path." He then offered up a prayer to God that he would dispose their hearts to forgive those who despitefully used them, and said all manner of evil things against them, and besought Him that he would change their minds, break the yoke of human authority, and restore peace to their weeping Zion. He next entered into a history of the York Street Congregation, in its connexion with the Remonstrant Synod and the cause of its withdrawal from that body, of which our readers are already fully aware. He stated that the standard of the Presbytery of Antrim, at license and ordination, had been always that of the immortal Chillingworth—the Bible, and the Bible alone, the religion of Protestants. This is "the soundness of faith" contended for by the founders of our Presbytery one hundred years ago. Were those men infidels, he asked, because they maintained such principles? Then John Porter is an infidel, and so am I, and David Watson, and Hugh Moore, and John Hall, and David Gordon; and so are the Mulligans, and the Murlands, and the Gardners, and the Ritchies, and the M'Kittricks, and other uncompromising laymen who have aided us to achieve once more the victory over exclusion and priestly domination. He next alluded to Mr. Jellie, his early training, his education at the Belfast Institution, which was founded and supported by the Drennans and M'Adams, the Simmses, the Dunvilles, and the M'Cleerys; and referred to his having completed his studies in Queen's College, and his having been licensed by the Presbytery of Bangor. He then invited Mr. Jellie, if he wished, to make any statement of his views on Christian doctrine, or his intentions in undertaking the charge—for his own satisfaction, or that of the congregation, or of those present.

Mr. JELLIE signified his acceptance of the call he had received, and distinctly stated his leading religious views, his belief in one God and one Mediator between God and men—the man Christ Jesus. He regarded the Son as the great instrument in the hands of the Father for effecting the salvation of the world. By the Father power and wisdom were conferred upon him, whereby he was enabled to work miracles, and utter truths which are able to make us wise unto salvation. He acknowledged him as his Master and Guide, and he accepted his words, and those which his apostles were commissioned to utter, as the expression of his creed. Alluding to his having maintained, in the Remonstrant Synod, that Presbyterians ought not, in matters of religious faith, to require anything from candidates for license or ordination beyond their expressing themselves disciples of Jesus Christ, he said—"By a disciple of Christ I mean a Christian, one who takes the revelation by Jesus as the rule of his faith and practice. If I am to be installed to-day, I take it for granted that it will be on the distinct understanding, both by Presbytery and Congregation, that I am a Christian."

The Congregation then having signified their adherence to the call, by holding up their right hands, Mr. Nelson, in the name of the Presbytery, welcomed Mr. Jellie as one of its members, and the Minister of York Street Congregation.

The Rev. JOHN PORTER gave the charge to the newly-installed Minister and his Congregation. He dwelt with much emphasis on the importance of the office of minister, and the responsibilities and duties involved in it; referred to the difficulties connected with the right interpretation of the Scriptures, and, therefore, the propriety of being charitable and tolerant, and refraining from all dogmatism; and urged practical preaching as the most profitable, but cautioned his young brother from supposing that he desired him to suppress his doctrinal opinions or keep them in the background. He recommended daily self-examination that he might be the better able to guard and direct his people, and besought him to care especially for the young of his flock. He then addressed the congregation on the duties devolving on them, and concluded by imploring the blessing of God.

The proceedings terminated with the singing of a hymn, and with the benediction.

THE OLD CONGREGATION OF ANTRIM.—INSTALLATION OF THE
REV. JAMES M'FERRAN.

On Wednesday, February 12, the Rev. James M'Ferran was installed in the pastoral charge of the Old Congregation of Antrim, vacant by the death of the Rev. James Carley. The Rev. C. J. M'Alister conducted the introductory religious services. The Rev. Classon Porter preached from Luke xvii. 21,—“The kingdom of God is within you.” The discourse was appropriate and impressive; it urged the importance of cherishing piety in the heart, and contained many practical suggestions for the cultivation of a religious spirit. The Rev. J. Scott Porter installed the new minister. In the earlier part of his address he referred to the practice in the primitive Church of the disciples in different localities meeting together for worship and edification, and alluded to the office-bearers placed over them to dispense the ordinances of religion and expound its doctrines. He remarked that he did not find the model of the Apostolic Church so strictly prescribed as a pattern for the Church in all ages, that it might not lawfully be varied as the varying circumstances of societies and men might require. He then proceeded as follows:—My brethren of this Church and congregation, you have recently been deprived, by the act of God, to which it is the duty of us all to bow in Christian submission, of your late venerable pastor, whose praise is in all our Churches, and whose name is enshrined in all your memories. The duty was imposed upon you of selecting a successor to exercise, in his room, the oversight of yourselves and your families—to preach to you “the faithful Word”—the Word of Life, and to dispense among you the ordinances of the Gospel. In the exercise of your undoubted right as Presbyterians, you have, by a unanimous vote, chosen and called the Rev. James M'Ferran to be your pastor—a man who was born and educated among you—whom you have known from his youth up, and of whose “doctrine, manner of life, steadfast purpose, faith, long-suffering, and charity,” you have had ample means of judging. You have applied to the Presbytery of

which, since its foundation, this congregation has been a constituent member, and which takes its name from the Church assembling within these walls, to induct or instal among you the minister of your choice. We gladly comply with your request. We, like yourselves, have had an opportunity of judging of your new minister's gifts and attainments; for his studies, with a view to the ministry, were carried on under our superintendence, and we recognise the wisdom of your choice. We see, in the circumstance of it having fallen upon him, a proof of your affectionate regard for the memory of your late beloved minister, with whose family he is so closely connected, and whose virtues, we trust, he will still endeavour to emulate; and we are now come together to ratify your union. But we have a duty to discharge to ourselves—to the congregations over which we preside—to the general Church of Christ, and to Christ himself, to manifest that, in undertaking this solemn office, we adopt all proper precautions to guard ourselves against the sin of introducing unfit and unworthy persons into the ministry. Individually and personally we are, one and all, satisfied of your new minister's fitness to preach the Christian faith; yet it is right and proper that we should make this fact, and the grounds of it, publicly known; so that no imputation may rest on us hereafter of having "laid hands suddenly" on one of whose qualifications we had not received any formal assurance. For this purpose it will be necessary for me to call on him to make a public and solemn confession of his faith in Christ. In doing so, I trust it is unnecessary for me and my brother ministers to disclaim all assertion of authority over the faith of your newly-elected pastor or your own. "To your own Master you stand or fall;" and we are not your masters. But, as you have satisfied yourselves that you have chosen a fit and proper person to exercise the ministry among you, so we claim the right, before we take part in the solemn work of ratifying and sanctioning your union, to assure ourselves of his fitness to become our brother minister and fellow-labourer in the great concerns of the Christian Church. And first, in order to assure us that he possesses that essential qualification of being the pastor of your free choice, I call on all the seatholders of this congregation who adhere to the call which has been presented to Mr. M'Ferran to signify the same by holding up their right hands.

The reply was unanimous.

Mr. PORTER—And now I call upon any who may be of the contrary opinion to signify the same by holding up their right hands.

(No dissent.)

Mr. PORTER—The call being thus unanimously adhered to, I ask you, my friend and brother, Mr. M'Ferran, whether you adhere to your acceptance of the call which you have received from this congregation?

Mr. M'FERRAN—I do.

Mr. PORTER—And now I call upon you, for your own satisfaction, that of your people, and that of the Presbytery here assembled, to declare whether you believe in the Divine revelation contained in the Scriptures, and accept it as your rule of faith and practice?

Mr. M'FERRAN—I do.

Mr. PORTER—And in like manner I call upon you, for your own satisfaction, that of your people, and that of the Presbytery here assembled, to make a statement of your religious views.

Mr. M'FERRAN here made a lengthened statement of his religious views.

Mr. PORTER—And, lastly, I inquire of you whether you are determined, God being your helper, to study the sacred Scriptures diligently and impartially—to order your walk and conversation as becometh a minister of the Gospel of Christ—to preach, expound, and enforce with your best ability both the doctrines and principles of that holy faith—to administer its ordinances duly and reverently—to visit the members of your flock from house to house—to console the sick and afflicted—to instruct the young and the ignorant in the blessed truth of the Christian faith; and to exhort all, without respect of persons, to the performance of their duties as followers of Christ?

Mr. M'FERRAN having signified assent,

Mr. PORTER—I have now to call on the members of the Presbytery to declare whether, having heard these questions and the answers given, they are satisfied to instal Mr. M'Ferran as pastor of the congregation, and their own fellow-labourer and brother in the work of the ministry?

The members of the Presbytery having done so,

The Rev. WILLIAM BRUCE then delivered the charge to the minister and congregation. He spoke of the high character which the late pastor held, and the esteem and affection that were entertained for him, not by his own flock merely, but by persons of all denominations, and urged Mr. M'Ferran to assiduous and unremitting exertions to fill the void which his removal had caused. He next alluded to the former ministers of the congregation. You will have still further to carry down through another generation the hereditary character of that pastoral charge which you are now called upon to fill; for I must ask you to travel back with me in thought to that venerable and excellent man, Mr. Bryson, for nearly fifty years Mr. Carley's predecessor in the ministry, whose daughter, I believe the only successor of the family, at a very advanced age (eighty-five), of a superior spirit and admirable temper of soul, after witnessing the sorrows of this people, and being comforted by the prospect of your settlement, has this morning been gathered to the tomb of her fathers. I have but an indistinct recollection, but my father esteemed him highly as his co-Presbyter for, I think, about twenty years; and my friend, Mr. Worrall, who, when he was minister of Larne, was well acquainted with him, used frequently to speak of him in most respectful and affectionate terms. Tracing our steps still further back we come to Dr. Duchal, and losing all but traditionary accounts, we have in his different publications in defence of the Christian faith and explanation of the Christian doctrine, abundant proof of those eminent qualifications that made the congregation of Wood-street, in Dublin, invite him to replace that man of pre-eminent gifts and endowments, Mr. Abernethy, who was for twenty-seven years the minister of this congregation. He had been nearly twenty years its minister be-

fore he was called to fight the great battle of religious liberty—the battle that lasted through seven stormy Synods, and issued in the expulsion of the Antrim Presbytery, which has from that time maintained its distinct existence, and had acquired a high character among all denominations for the moderation of its principles and the respectability of its ministers, until these recent attempts at innovation upon its principles and constitution had injured its fair fame. A funeral sermon was preached in this pulpit by Dr. Duchal, which was afterwards published at the desire of the ministers of the Presbytery of Antrim, by Dr. Kirkpatrick, the author of “Presbyterian Loyalty,” and minister of the Second Presbyterian Congregation, Belfast, who, in an appendix to his sermon, uses these words:—“The reader cannot but observe that the Sermon and Memoirs take notice, as an ingredient in all the characters of the *five ministers* [Abernethy, Michael Bruce, S. Haliday, Shaw, and Taylor—other names were not given because they were still alive], that with zeal they espoused the cause of Christian liberty, and made a resolute and bold stand in its defence, which exposed them to popular odium and other great inconveniences, against which neither their unexceptionable (nay, their exemplary) moral character, nor their shining gifts, could protect them. What *they called* the cause of Christian liberty is not explained in their characters, and perhaps many who have no knowledge of what they meant by it may suspect that it must have been some monstrous error, unhooking Christianity itself, and striking at the vitals of religion, that drew upon them such resentment, and issued in a public breach between their brethren and them. I think it, therefore, no more than an act of bare justice due to the memory of such worthy men,—viz., Abernethy, Michael Bruce, Haliday, Shaw, and Taylor, —and a service I owe (I do not say to the Dissenting) but to the Protestant interest, to assure all who want to be satisfied that the matters comprehended in *their notion of Christian liberty* were *extra essential points*,—i.e., points in which the essence of religion did not consist, such as eminently wise, pious, and learned men have differed, and now do differ about, and that it would be very unreasonable and uncharitable to detract in the least from the glory and merit of an amiable character, whatever side of the question any man may find himself obliged, in the simplicity and sincerity of his heart, to embrace upon an impartial inquiry.” These very clear and definite words are a very accurate expression of our views of the sentiments of those eminent men who laid the foundation of our Presbytery, and with equal exactness state the principle which we are most desirous to maintain. Mr. Bruce then dwelt on the ministerial office as exhibited in the Sacred Scriptures, and placed distinctly before the pastor and the people their several duties and responsibilities.

The services were closed with prayer.

In the evening, the members of Presbytery were entertained at dinner in the Court House. Many of the most respectable inhabitants of Antrim, of various denominations, were present, as well as friends from Ballyclare and Templepatrick. Mr. Matthew Gibson occupied the chair.

In the course of the evening Mr. Bruce read a letter sent to him, as Moderator of the Presbytery, signed by the Revs. S. C. Nelson, D. Watson, J. Porter, H. Moore, J. Hall, and D. Gordon, complaining that the Rev. J. S. Porter had, in a letter published in the *Whig* of the 7th February, misstated the terms on which he had been appointed to perform the installation service at Antrim, and saying, that if he called on the minister to make a statement of his religious views for the satisfaction of the Presbytery, as well as of the congregation, he would be violating his engagement: they therefore called on the Moderator to compel him to abide by the engagement he made, otherwise they could not consistently with a sense of duty be present. This letter was forwarded to Mr. Bruce by Mr. Henry N. Smith, Solicitor.

This letter explains the absence of the ministers who signed it from the installation service. Mr. Bruce, Mr. M'Alester, Mr. M'Ferran, and Mr. George (Elder) bore their testimony that Mr. Porter had conducted the service agreeably to the terms on which he had undertaken to perform it.

THE REV. JOHN PORTER AND THE REV. C. J. M'ALESTER.

In reference to the report which appeared in the last number of *The Christian Unitarian*, of the meeting of the Presbytery of Antrim, on January 1st, I have received the following from the Rev. John Porter, dated February 17:—

"I have made enquiry of several gentlemen who were present at the meeting, whether they heard me say, 'You had not behaved yourself like a gentleman'—and they all assure me they did not. The reporter from *The Northern Whig* authorizes me to say I did not use the language. And for myself, I am certain I did not, as there was nothing in your behaviour to justify its application. With regard to the other statements attributed to me by your correspondent, though I might question their formal accuracy, yet they do not misrepresent my feelings. I felt your frequent attacks on our religious character as so many stabs. And I regarded the 'Resolution' you proposed at the meeting as a disingenuous attempt to place us in a degrading light before our Congregations. We therefore rejected it with indignation."

In reply to this communication, I beg to state that I have applied to the gentleman who furnished the report, and who is not a member of our Presbytery, and he assures me that Mr. Porter did apply to me the words, "You have not behaved like a gentleman," or language to that effect. But I can well understand that words uttered in excitement may not be recollected by Mr. Porter; and that in the stormy scene in which they were used—several speaking at the same time—the newspaper reporter may not have caught them. Mr. Porter, however, admits the accuracy, substantially at least, of the other expressions, which were much more offensive, viz., "Such trickery is of a piece with your conduct of late; you have been going about, day after day, stabbing us all in the dark, and the object of your present motion is to blacken us and whitewash yourself." I am not conscious of any language which I have ever

used in public or private towards Mr. Porter, or any of his co-Presbyters, that could afford the slightest ground for such a charge. I was greatly pained to hear one whom I had so long esteemed speaking thus, and I expressed a hope at the time that in his cooler moments he would withdraw what he had said : but to find him, after an interval of several weeks, when all excitement must have subsided, avowing expressions so opprobrious, is more painful still. I feel that his language towards me has been most unkind, and I *know* that it has been most unjust ; but I am reluctant to make farther comment ; and I am especially unwilling to write a single word that might drive us still further apart.

Holywood, Feb. 21, 1862.

C. J. M'ALESTER.

OBITUARY.

MEMOIR OF THE LATE REV. JAMES CARLEY.

THE above-named excellent man and most faithful Christian minister died at the Manse, Antrim, on the 20th day of December, 1861, in the 76th year of his age, and the 51st of his ministry as Pastor of the oldest Presbyterian Congregation in that town. His retiring habits and peculiarly unassuming disposition would have caused him to shrink from the idea of an extended and eulogistic "Obituary Notice" of his life and character ; but it would be unjust to his affectionate people and to the public, to permit so amiable and exemplary a man to pass away from the scenes of time without at least some brief *memento* that he had lived, and laboured, and died, in the assured faith of the Gospel. In what we are about to say, however, we shall keep his modest wishes and unambitious spirit strictly in view, to temper the warmth of personal regard and professional esteem.

The parents of our worthy brother, John Carley and Jane Yule, occupied a pleasant farm at "Kilroot Point," where the French Admiral, Thurot, landed in the year 1760, on his advance to attack Carrickfergus Castle. The locality naturally acquired some historical notoriety ; and the more so, because the grandfather and father of our late friend were made prisoners, and compelled to point out the approaches to the town. The blessed inheritance of a gentle spirit, upright principles, and remarkable prudence, he derived from his good parents, whom the writer of this notice well knew and greatly esteemed ; and his early religious nurture emanated from the late Rev. John Bankhead, of Ballycarry, a man of singular natural ability, liberal in his theological opinions, and a wonderful judge of human aptitudes and character. By advice of this shrewd spiritual guide, James Carley was devoted to the work of the ministry, and obtained his school-education in Carrickfergus, under a sizar of Trinity College, called Slattery, an eminent classic, though a wayward and eccentric man.

On the 9th day of November, 1805, he entered Glasgow College, very fairly prepared to profit by its opportunities ; and his career,

during the usual four sessions in that seminary, was always highly creditable, and would have been distinguished, had not "Irish students," as a custom, been shuffled into the back ground. In the year 1807, he obtained the degree of Master of Arts; and in February, 1809, he was licensed to preach by the Presbytery of Templepatrick, along with his particular friends, William Finlay, David Whyte, and H. Montgomery—the last two of whom survive. A somewhat singular circumstance occurred in the spring of that year. The large congregation of Donegore required a minister, owing to the removal of the Rev. J. C. Ledlie to Larne. Thereupon, one portion of the congregation desired to obtain James Carley, and another to obtain H. Montgomery as their pastor. Both in turn preached four Sundays on trial; but neither was able to secure *the two-thirds* of votes essential to a valid election;—and thus two of the most attached fellow-students, before the elder of them had passed his twenty-third year, were pitted against each other in anxious and exciting competition, which, however, did not produce one unkind feeling at the time, or leave one moment's alienation behind.

Few circumstances could illustrate more clearly than that just stated, the force of the poet's words—

"There's a Divinity that *shapes* our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will."

The mutual defeat which the two young farmers' sons inflicted upon each other, in pursuit of what naturally seemed to them a great prize, gave a new colouring to the entire aspect of their future lives, and produced happy results both to themselves and others, of which they never dreamed. Into the uncongenial soil of Donegore they could not have struck deep root, and, consequently, their fruits would have been few and tasteless. Happily, therefore,—we had almost said providentially,—their first great aim miscarried. Two months thereafter, H. Montgomery's "lines fell in pleasant places." The soil of Dunmurry was thoroughly adapted to his intellectual and moral nature; and, although fifty-two years have passed away since the sapling was planted, and although many fair branches "have been withered and strewn," the old tree, even yet, is not quite unfruitful. James Carley, in a brief period, became assistant pastor to the venerable and enlightened Rev. William Bryson, of Antrim, the not unsuitable successor to a long line of eminent ministers, including the celebrated John Abernethy, Dr. Duchal, M'Lean, and Bryson. In his new and congenial field of operations Mr. Carley speedily developed his many admirable qualities, and secured universal esteem. He and his former competitor in Donegore soon became united by interesting ties of affinity; they uniformly assisted each other at the solemn services of the communion for upwards of fifty years; their views upon *all* religious subjects were singularly coincident; their friendship was like that of David and Jonathan, and a few short years will renew it, we believe, in a better world, never more to be interrupted by time or change.

The character of our departed friend may be viewed in three main aspects—Personal, Social, and Ministerial.

Personally, he was a man of a clear, vigorous, and penetrating understanding, able to acquire knowledge with great ease, and to communicate it with singular success. Hence, for many years, he was a popular and useful teacher of youth; and numbers of the gentry of Ulster, as well as many of its professional men—lawyers, divines, and medical practitioners—are largely indebted to his skilful and conscientious training, for the honour and prosperity which they now deservedly enjoy. Of no man could it have been more truly said, “the integrity of the upright doth guide him;” truth, honour, and sincerity were the constant companions of his journey through life. His mind was substantial and vigorous, rather than active and excitable, and hence he *wrote* with more facility than he *spoke*. Hence, also, he was rather formal and silent in mixed society, though, with familiar friends, he was abundantly agreeable and kindly, and no one ever lived with him in the domestic circle who did not part from him with sentiments of affectionate esteem. No man ever possessed a purer heart, or lived a purer life.

Socially, from some of the personal characteristics just adverted to, Mr. Carley was not an *ostensible* man. He was not fluent of speech, nor ready in debates, nor forward in pressing even his matured opinions upon others, and, consequently, many far inferior men outstripped him in general society and in the discussions of public assemblies. But, when he did speak, his words fell upon the minds of all that heard them with the irresistible weight of sound judgment and sterling principle. No one could misunderstand him; he never paltered in a double sense; his words went straight to the point he aimed at as an arrow from the bow. This clearness of mind and directness of purpose, united, as all men knew them to be, with genuine unostentatious benevolence of heart, secured for him that extraordinary amount of social influence—that universal esteem—which he so long and so deservedly enjoyed in the town and neighbourhood of Antrim. In all works of social usefulness and benevolence, his sound judgment, his admirable talent for systematic arrangement, and his untiring energy in carrying out valuable designs, rendered him a public benefactor; and the high estimation in which his character and services were held, was beautifully evinced on two separate occasions, when men of all political parties, and all religious sects, honourably united in presenting to him a handsome piece of plate and valuable pecuniary gifts, as, in their own language, “an inadequate acknowledgement of his private worth and public usefulness.” The same feelings were still more touchingly expressed by the vast concourse that attended his funeral—by the kindly desire universally expressed, that his funeral sermon should be preached at an hour when all denominations could attend—and by the solemn crowds, of all churches, which attended that service when performed by his life-long friend, the Rev. Dr. Montgomery. Many an unaffected tribute of tears was that day paid to the memory of the kind man and the good: and it would be difficult to say whether the crowded assemblage of generous ministers and people there united, conferred more honour upon the memory of the

departed, or upon their own living faith and charity! It was a beautiful, an affecting, an instructive sight: and fully proved that, in all sects, there is a *common Christianity* which harmonizes with the best instincts of human nature, and rises, on favourable occasions, superior to all the contracted dogmas of Churches.

Ministerially, Mr. Carley appeared in his noblest and most attractive aspect. The remarkable symmetry and perfection of his bodily organization were but the index of his well-balanced mind and pure spirit. His soul was a meet residence for faith, hope, and charity: and no more thoroughly convinced Christian believer than James Carley ever lived or died. Yet he was not a Christian merely by education or implicit faith. He had anxiously studied the Evidences of Christianity until he had become unhesitatingly convinced that the Bible contains a Divine Revelation; and having attained that conclusion, his next step was to ascertain the *actual* teachings of the Sacred Records, utterly irrespective of all human creeds. His long, serious, and prayerful inquiries upon these last points, led him to adopt what are termed "High Arian" views concerning the person and office of Christ, in contradistinction to Trinitarianism on the one hand, and Humanitarianism on the other: and likewise to embrace the enlarged and cheering views of Arminianism in regard to the terms of salvation, in opposition to the narrow and gloomy dogmas of Calvinism. In relation to the person, office, and work of Christ, in particular, his views were amongst the very highest ever held by a genuine Unitarian; and it gratified many to learn that a man so able and so good shrunk, in his latest hours, from those latitudinarian views of discipline and doctrine which some are labouring to foist upon our Churches, under spurious pleas of liberty and toleration.

As a *preacher*, Mr. Carley was calm, Scriptural, serious, and argumentative—always instructive, but never exciting—admirably fitted for the peaceful scenes amidst which, as if in accommodation to his gentle spirit, his lot had been happily cast. He possessed a large store of latent energy, however, which stirring events might have roused into action; and his elevated views of Christian duty would have prevented his quailing under any difficulties. Of this native energy and high principle, the last three acts of his beautiful life supplied abundant evidence. When, on a late occasion, some members of the Presbytery of Antrim meditated the opening of a door for the possible entrance of infidelity into its pulpits, by trampling under foot its salutary laws and immemorial customs, he left the chamber of sickness, where he had been principally confined for two years by hopeless suffering, came a long distance to Belfast at the risk of his life, and made a statement of the principles and practice of the Presbytery, so clear that no honest man could have resisted its force. The venerable Father of the Presbytery, however, spoke in vain to the children whom he had ordained—"he told a tale to a deaf adder"—a majority, secured by the foulest means, trampled, boastingly, upon law and decency—and, at the end of six hours, when an adjournment of the discussion was earnestly prayed for, in mercy to the aged man who had left a sick bed to do his duty, the respite was scorn-

fully refused. Some two additional hours the veteran Christian bore up against this cruel treatment; but he never ceased to feel the effects of that dark day and its darker proceedings.

Again, in a most enfeebled state, Mr. Carley attended the Ballyclare dinner some ten days later, to bear, with the glorious spirit of a martyr, his dying testimony against the tyrannical usurpations of so-called liberals, lay and clerical, in his ancient Presbytery.

Belfast and Ballyclare undoubtedly hastened his departure, but the last act of the good and wise man was as noble as his whole life had been beautiful. When lying upon that bed where in a few hours he was no longer to breathe,—when the eye could no longer see,—when the trembling hand could no longer hold a pen, he asked a friend to guide his fingers, and signed *three protests* against the scandalous acts of his junior brethren and their lay abettors. Over those honoured signatures even manly eyes have shed tears, and they will be transmitted to coming generations as glorious monuments of dying, yet *undying*, Christian fortitude and fidelity.

We should wish, did our space permit, to speak of our departed brother in his most useful sphere of duty, as a vigilant, faithful, considerate, loving pastor; we should delight to follow him in his domestic visitings when he gently rebuked the sinner, counselled the weak and erring, instructed the young, consoled the afflicted, and brought good to all; especially we should rejoice to speak of his communion services—so sweet, so edifying, so full of “simplicity and godly sincerity;” but all these things are enshrined in many living hearts, and may yet bear blessed fruits in many generations. Oh! how badly can we bear, in this unhappy crisis of our Church, the loss of one so elevated in principle, so guileless in spirit, so pure in life! “But although dead he yet speaketh,” in the beautiful and instructive example of Christian integrity and worth which he has bequeathed to his friends, to his Church, and to his sorrowing congregation.

Died at Antrim, on February 8th, Mary Bryson, aged eighty-five years, the last survivor of the family of the late Rev. William Bryson, for about fifty years minister of the Old Presbyterian Congregation of Antrim. Possessed of a superior and well-cultivated mind, and early imbued with religious principles, she exhibited throughout a long life that Christian faith which was her comfort and support in death.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

“The Sunday School Union” is in type. “A German Funeral Hymn” in our next.

Communications for the Editor, to be addressed by post to Rev. C. J. McAlester, Hollywood; or, otherwise, to 28, Arthur Street, Belfast.

Orders for the work and business communications to be sent to the Agent of the Society, 28, Arthur Street.

THE

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CHRIST NOT A MERE MAN.

It has been often said by those who misunderstand, perhaps sometimes by those who misrepresent, the doctrines of Christian Unitarians, that they regard Christ as a mere man; and we cannot be too earnest in our endeavours to remove such a misunderstanding, or correct such a misrepresentation. There are, indeed, some men who entertain the opinion that our Lord was merely a man, and that he possessed no superhuman power and no superhuman wisdom; but they cannot justly be regarded as members of any Christian denomination. These thinkers deny all supernatural communications, and regard the external world, in its creation and continuance, and the mind itself, in its instincts and faculties, as the only sources of knowledge respecting God and his plans. We commonly speak of them as Deists—a term which ought never to be employed in an offensive spirit, or applied to any as a stigma and a reproach. We cannot determine the various causes that lead to diversities of opinion, and we must admit that some earnest, sincere, and virtuous men have, from time to time, adopted Deistical opinions; although it may be true that more have done so from the wickedness of their heart, and from a desire that the retributions of the future life may be only a fable to frighten the weak. There was a time when men were accustomed to look with horror on any who held opinions different from their own, or from those which generally prevailed; but we have imbibed little of the spirit of religious freedom, and have used unprofitably the high privileges which, as a Church, we have enjoyed, if we have not learned to regard with equanimity and forbearance what-

ever conscientious diversities of opinion we may find among our fellowmen. If they have not the same precious consolations which our Christian faith gives us, or the same glorious and ennobling hopes which it inspires, we may justly grieve for their loss, but we should never treat them with coldness, or speak of them with contempt. Deists do not, in general, doubt the reality of the existence of Jesus; they believe that he lived in Palestine, that he was a good—a very good, and a highly gifted man, and that there is much in him which we might do well to imitate. Some writers of this class have dwelt in glowing terms on the excellence of his character, and his wonderful knowledge of human nature; but they regard him as having no knowledge but what is attainable by natural means, and therefore they believe that he is able to afford nothing more than human authority for any word he uttered and any truth he taught.

Christians, on the other hand, receive the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament as being more than portions of the literature of different ages and nations, and as containing important and truthful narratives of a miraculous kind, and important truths supernaturally communicated for the instruction and guidance of humanity; and they must of necessity regard Jesus as more than a mere man—they must believe that he is “the Christ, the Son of the living God.” This view especially must be entertained by the Non-Subscribing Churches of Ireland; for it has been our uniform boast, amid all our disagreements, that we acknowledge no human leader. Augustine and Calvin, Luther and Zwingle, Chalmers and Channing, were very great men; but they were mere men, and, therefore, fallible, and not safe guides and instructors. Our watch-word has been—“*No human authority*”—“*Christ our only Master.*” Do we not thus acknowledge Christ to be more than a mere man?

Passing over the references that are made in the Scriptures of the Old Testament to the advent of Christ, and dwelling only on the records of him which the Gospels contain, and the testimony which the Apostles bore to him, we are driven to acknowledge that he possessed more than mere human power and wisdom. See him stilling the tempest, or giving sight to a blind man, or calling back

the dead to life, and you feel that Nicodemus expresses your own convictions when he says, "No man could do these miracles except God were with him;" and you are constrained to believe our Lord himself when he says, "The Father that dwelleth in me he doeth the works." Hear the words of solemn and precious meaning which he utters,—words that remain fresh and true when other words, in the lapse of time, have faded into oblivion, and continue true and comforting now as they were at first,—and you are led to believe him when he says, "The words that I speak are not my own, but my Father's." Mark the purity and perfection of his character—its originality—standing out before and above all other characters that are recorded in the annals of the past—and think of the earnest testimony which the apostles bore to the value of his doctrine and the divinity of his mission, and if you accept the records which exhibit these wonderful doctrines and this more wonderful life, you must admit that Christ is more than a mere man.

Every member of a Christian Church thinks of Christ as more than a mere man—whether he be Roman Catholic or Protestant, Trinitarian or Unitarian. All our Churches are dedicated to the worship of God according to the Gospel of Christ. We would not think of erecting a house in which to worship God according to the teachings of a mere man, whether that man were distinguished for his genius, his learning, or his worth; whether he were a poet or philosopher, a patriot or philanthropist. Every Christian Church, whatever be the denomination to which it belongs, is in one sense dedicated to Christ. We would never think of dedicating a Church in the same sense to Milton, or Shakespeare, or William Tell, or John Howard the philanthropist.

In our day the vast majority of Christians—the Church of Rome, the Greek Church, and many Protestant Churches—believe Christ to be God himself. They argue thus from the mighty works which he performed, from the homage that was paid to him when he was on earth, and from certain names that are given to him in the Scriptures: and believing him to be God, they worship him as God the Son; and many of them honour the Virgin Mary as the Mother of God. It is not our

object at present to combat this view, which we regard as most erroneous, and to show, as we think we easily could, that Christ's miracles merely show that God was with him; that the worship that was paid to him on earth was not offered to him as God; and that the titles he received do not by any means imply that he was God. While Christian Unitarians dissent from this doctrine respecting Christ, and protest against it, they hold exalted views of his character and mission. They believe that God was in him,—that he spoke the words of God, and revealed his will, and carried out his benign purposes,—and, therefore, that his Gospel possesses divine authority. This view of Christ gives us all the confidence in his word, and all the faith in his work, which we could have if he were God himself, while we feel that his mission and work, his life and death, are more intelligible to us. The highest dignity we find ascribed to Jesus in Scripture is the Son—the only-begotten and the well-beloved Son of God—an exalted title surely, and one that distinctly implies the divine authority of his mission and his work.

Those Christians who agree in believing that Christ is neither God, nor God the Son, but in his highest office the Son of God, are divided in opinion respecting his nature,—some understanding literally those passages of Scripture that indicate his pre-existence—as “Before Abraham was I am,” and “Glorify thou me with the glory which I had with thee before the world was;” and others considering that he was, as he is often called, a man,—not pre-existing, but supernaturally receiving the Spirit of God, and thus fitted for the holy and momentous work to which he was appointed. Differing, as these two classes do, regarding Christ's nature, they do not differ respecting his office, and they agree in attributing to him works greater than a mere man could perform, and wisdom higher and deeper than a mere man could possess. Of illustrious Unitarians who believed in Christ's pre-existence, we may mention John Locke, John Milton, Richard Price, and William E. Channing; and of others not less illustrious who held the opposite view, and regarded him as a man supernaturally endowed, we may mention Nathaniel Lardner, Joseph Priestley, Theophilus Lindsay,

and Henry Ware. Some, speaking of his nature, might call our Saviour a man, but all Christians unite in gratefully acknowledging that God "sanctified and sent him to be the Saviour of the world."

If there are any who regard our blessed Lord as a mere man, they must believe the sacred Scriptures to be fables, worthless and deceptive; and thus the holy lessons which a mother's piety had instilled into their childhood's mind, and which had gained a place in their soul—all the hopes and consolations which the Gospel offers in seasons of sorrow and trial disappear, and,

"Like the baseless fabric of a vision,
Leave not a track behind."

Christian Unitarians cherish the belief that the Saviour is more than a mere man, and they have done more, in proportion to their numbers, than any other denomination to establish this important truth. The divine mission of Christ has been the great fundamental principle of our Church, and it has been the devoted labour of our best and ablest minds to vindicate and preserve it. What would we gain by rejecting this doctrine, and dragging our blessed Master down to the level of fallible humanity? If he were a tyrant that oppressed us and rendered our homes wretched, we might wish to dethrone him: if he were an enemy that aimed at our ruin, or sought to rob us of our property or our peace, we might reasonably try to get rid of him. But to him we owe much of our personal freedom, domestic bliss, and national greatness. Drag him down from the high position which God has given him, and which the intelligence, the gratitude, and the piety of millions have rejoiced to acknowledge, and you gain nothing, but lose much—much for time and much for eternity. We gladly confess with Peter, that he is the Christ the Son of the living God, and on that rock we seek to build our Church.

JESUS vanquished the tempter alone and in the wilderness, before he conquered him on the pinnacle of the temple or on the summit of the lofty mountain.—*Nichols.*

GERMAN FUNERAL SONG.

[SLIGHTLY ALTERED AND ABRIDGED FROM LONGFELLOW'S TRANSLATION.]

COME! bear him forth, with solemn song,
The road is short, the rest is long;
The Lord who gave now calls away—
This home was for a passing day!

Here, for a time, the inmate dwelt,
And joy and grief by turns he felt:
Poor dwelling, now we close thy door—
The sojourner returns no more!

Chime on, ye bells! again begin,
And ring the Sabbath morning in.
The work is past,—the rest begun,
Which Jesus for his people won.

How many graves around us lie!
How many homes are in the sky!
Ye quiet slumberers, make room
For a new pilgrim hither come.

Now lay the weary body down,—
He goes to wear the immortal crown:
The day was dark and sultry here,
Farewell! the *night* is cool and clear.

LIFE AND IMMORTALITY BROUGHT TO LIGHT.

THE most serious question which a reasonable person can ask,—if we except that which relates to the being and character of God,—the question whose answer must affect more profoundly than any other all the views, affections, interests, motives, and reasonable purposes of life,—is, whether we shall live after death—whether our existence terminates in the grave, or whether it is an immortal existence. This, I say, next to the being and character of God, is the most momentous question which can be proposed for an answer. If it ever seem not to be so, it is because it is confounded with and lost in others with which it has nothing to do, as, whether one dreads anni-

lilation, or whether any such dread is not swallowed up and lost in the greater dread—being such as we are—of living again. But the magnitude of the true question is not in the least diminished or enlarged by any feeling of ours, whether of anxiety or indifference, but depends on the immeasurable abyss between non-existence and eternal existence—depends on the fact that it includes in itself whatever does most to invest with awe or hope our mortal destiny. To live for only a few years, or to live for ever!—all other questions beside this are dwarfed into insignificance.

At times this is felt by those whose thoughts are most shut up to the present moment. Whether the little child that watched your coming at the window, and ran to greet you at the door and nestled in your heart, is now but a handful of dust or a happy creature in heaven—still loving you, and ready to welcome you and take you by the hand, as with fearful feet you enter the unknown realm—cannot be made a trifling question. However faithful or unfaithful you may have been, it is no trifling question whether the husband or wife, the parent or child, the companion or friend, is literally no more, or lives as the emigrant lives, who has preceded his family a little across the sea to a foreign shore, where all expect soon to find a home. On one side non-existence; on the other side, the dead alive again, eternity, immortality, retribution, and the name which is above every name. Which is my doom? It matters not what I may hope or fear, but between these alternatives lies nearly everything which can most profoundly interest a thinking mind. I regard it as one of the internal evidences of the truth of Christianity, that while it passes by all secondary questions, it meets this greatest of questions, meets it fully, meets it in the only way in which it could be met—not with poetry; not by philosophical balancings of metaphysical proofs; not by sentimental phrases; not by vague conjectures; but by a visible fact. Up to that time, one appalling, visible fact had dominated over the world—the fact of death. Death had reigned. All that had lived had died. The fathers were dead; sages were dead; oppressors and oppressed, the evil and the good were dead. The earth was one vast cemetery, and not

one of its graves had been broken. Men might reason, and hope, and fear, and half-believe; but always these half-beliefs were confronted by the visible fact from which there was no escape. The rising hope was chilled and frozen by a wind that blew across the place of graves. There was the inexorable fact of death, and nothing to meet it. It tyrannized over the reason more even than over the imagination of men. No voice had spoken from the closing tomb, no voice from the heavens. There was only silence above and death below.

Christianity met that fact by the only evidence with which it could be met—it met the *scepticism* of the senses, by an *evidence addressed to the senses*,—by the resurrection from the dead. We talk of spirituality, as if it did not need this visible evidence. Let us thank God that He is more merciful than our folly asks. Somehow, here, our souls are connected with the body, and high as we may soar in faith, the highest flight must start from the earth. And God has given just the evidence we need for the immortal life, in the resurrection of Christ. Without this, the teaching of Christ would have been but one more conjecture added to the thousand preceding conjectures of wise and good men. It was his visible resurrection that broke the horrible spell which had benumbed the faith of men. It was his resurrection which reared over the cemetery of the generations of the dead the symbol of immortal hope. I do not mean to say that there is not much in nature to *suggest* the idea of a future existence. But suggestion and hope are not proof or belief. No fact in history is more certain, than that Christianity owes its belief in immortality to the fact that one clothed in supernatural power and wisdom and goodness, not only taught the doctrine of immortality, but died and was visibly raised from the dead.

But more than this. What is the state of the departed? Here again I would ask you to consider how our Saviour's teachings have in them nothing to gratify an idle curiosity. All those trifling speculations which occupy such space in false religions and in our own minds, he passes by, and confines himself in substance to two truths—the ones all-important and only important. One is that evil and good shall meet with absolutely just

awards in the righteous judgment of heaven ; and the other, that he who enforces the eternal law of rectitude is a Father. It is all expressed in the text—I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God. All questions are answered in this one assurance. To my Father and yours?—yes, yours!—guilty, unworthy, who forget him, who return thankless lives for his goodness—still your Father ! Were a volume filled with descriptions of the occupations of another life, it would not contain so much as this one assurance ; nay, the necessary limitations on what was revealed, and the limitations on our understanding of it, would be the source of perpetual error. The revelation takes us to that fundamental truth on which the mind can rest with entire security. It is one of those cases in which the only knowledge which we want is that which lays a solid foundation for the moral sentiment of trust. What more does the believer have reason to know except that he shall live under the care of the Almighty Father ! Into what new scenes we may enter we know not ; perhaps, as the Apostles suggest, they could not be revealed to those who dwell in the senses ; but we know that all shall be well. We may trust all to God, and be happy in that trust.—*E. Peabody.*

THE REV. J. M'FERRAN'S STATEMENT OF CHRISTIAN
BELIEF,

MADE ON THE OCCASION OF HIS INSTALLATION IN ANTRIM ON FEB. 12.

I BELIEVE the Scriptures teach that Jehovah, the Creator of heaven and earth, the God of angels and archangels, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, is the “only true God,” and the only proper object of religious worship. I believe he is one mind, one person, one infinite, almighty, and eternal spirit, the great first cause of all things visible and invisible. I believe that his presence pervades the universe ; that his providence disposes and conducts all events for the general good and his own glory ; that his love is as absolute as his power, being the original source of every blessing ; and that his free unmerited grace is the sole original spring of the redemption and salvation of the world.

While I cherish most devoutly this faith in the unrivalled supremacy and absolute perfection of one God the Father, I receive most gratefully whatever the Scriptures declare respecting the Lord Jesus. I believe he is the Christ, the Son of God, on whom rested "the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of Jehovah." I believe in his divine mission and authority; that, when the world was dead in trespasses and sins, he came forth from the Father, "was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth;" that the words which he spake were not his own but the Father's; that all his power was given him by the Father; and that for his obedience unto death, God *highly exalted* him, made him head over all things unto the church, and appointed him to be the final judge of the quick and the dead.

I believe the great and benevolent *object* of the advent, mission, and ministry of the Son of God, so far as the Scriptures reveal it, is to turn men from darkness to light, from sin to holiness and virtue. I believe, for this purpose, the Spirit was given to him "without measure;" that, although human in his affections, he was one with God as man never was; that he spake as man never spake, and declared more fully than all who went before, or have come after him, the Father's *mind*; that he *exemplified* the life of humanity in its highest form, and was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners;" and that he died on Calvary in order to "redeem us from all iniquity," bring all nigh unto God by a life of faith and holy obedience, and carry out, in his death as well as in his life, the beneficent purpose of the all-gracious Father, in the temporal and eternal happiness of his children. Hence, I most gladly acknowledge him, as one specially raised up and specially sent of God, to be the Saviour of sinners; as the way, the truth, and the life; as the one mediator between God and man, and our holy Lord and Master; as the prophet of immortality, and our final judge.

I believe man to be a free agent and an accountable being; that, by his body, he is connected with the earth

and the beasts that perish, but, by his spirit, with heaven and the angels that surround the throne of God. I believe great may be his degradation, or glorious his triumph: if he follow the law of the flesh, that he will disgrace and corrupt the nature God has conferred on him, and go downward; but if he hearken to reason, conscience, and the Holy Spirit's promptings, that he will go onward and upward, grow day by day in the spiritual life, and seek after glory, honour, and immortality, by a patient continuance in well-doing.

Such are the views which the Holy Scriptures lead me to entertain of God, and Christ, and man. The Father is the "only true God" and the fountain of all power and love; Christ is the symbol of the Father's attributes, and the channel of his grace and truth; man is an accountable being, for, though weak, and erring, and sinful, he may become wise, and strong, and holy, through the proper discipline of his nature and the divine aid which God has promised to all who ask it.

AN APOLOGUE.

A YOUTH just fresh from College, fill'd
 With classical and learned lore,
 In mathematics and in logic skill'd,
 And self-conceit in ample store,
 Smiling, presents himself before
 The College of Physicians, saying,—
 "A Doctor, please, I wish to be,
 And, as it's useless long delaying
 To test me in anatomy,—
 (I think my word should quite assure you
 That I am competent to cure you),—
 I prithee grant me a degree,
 And dub me straight a true M.D."

The old physicians, learned, wise,
 Looked on the youth with mute surprise:
 "You surely dream! the thing can't be,
 We dare not grant you a degree."

'Tis ours to watch that men and women
Are soothed, not tortured into heaven.
Responsibility upon us lies
To see that none, however wise
In other matters, forth shall go
To add to human pain and woe.
'Tis yours to state, and ours to hear
In answers full, distinct, and clear,
That of the wondrous human frame
You have the knowledge which you claim,
And to adorn the Doctor's name
Shall be your whole life's earnest aim."

Thus spake the old ; but in the College
Were many men of younger knowledge,
Who thought such notions out of date,
Too narrow-minded. "'Tis too late,"
They fiercely answered, "now to bind
In such old trammels rising mind,
An insult to ingenuous youth
To cast a doubt upon his truth.
He says he's fit for his degree ;
His patients, not our Board, should see
That all is so. What arrant bigotry
To ask an embryo M.D.
Strict questions in anatomy!"

The few were cautious, wise, and old,
The many headstrong, rash, and bold ;
And so diplomaed goes the young M.D.
To kill or cure as chances shall decree.
Settled with patients that can pay,
He visits, ever blandly gay ;
And when a fever's fierce attack
Seizes some mortal, the vain quack
Stretches his victim on the rack,
Gives poisoned draught for healing balm,
Creates a phrenzy where a calm
Was needed most ; and, by and by,
When one by one his patients die,
The Schools awake, and wondering find
That self-made Doctors kill mankind.

A Fable this ; for common sense
 Has not as yet quite fled from hence
 In worldly things : but let us fit
 Our fable with a moral to it.
 For College of Physicians, try
 How suits our Antrim Presbytery ;
 With such a clue, no thinking mind
 Can fail, in what I've writ, to find
 The moral that lies hid behind.

Y. Z.

 S T R A U S S .

On looking calmly at the theory of Strauss, we can only arrive at the conclusion that his ingenuity and learning have been applied to a very wretched purpose. His Scriptural criticisms, if not absolutely insane, are assuredly the most subtle and audacious we have ever met. Professing to enter upon his work entirely free from prejudice or previous bias, he nevertheless commences by assuming that miracles are impossible ! Then, by many winding ways, and along many a dreary path, he cautiously, but always coolly, endeavours to lead us onward to his own conclusions. And what conclusions ! Or rather, what empty and unholy *delusions* ! He announces, on his own authority, that what the sacred writers affirm respecting Jesus of Nazareth can only with truth be affirmed in reference to the *human race*, of which our Lord is to be regarded as a sort of ideal. Thus the human race is the only true *incarnation*, as being the union of the Eternal Spirit with perishable flesh. *Working of miracles* consists only in the conquest of mind over matter ; whilst in the gradual elevation of man from material into spiritual life, we may behold the *resurrection* and *ascension* which the Gospels mythically describe ! Here, in plain terms, is the amount of all his statements, whether as put forward in his *Leben Jesu*, his *Dogmatik* or his *Streitschriften* !

But it may be necessary to go a little more into detail, and only a very little, for the purpose of showing the true character of this man's criticisms. He says, in substance, that the Gospel accounts of the miraculous works

of the Saviour are merely to be regarded as narratives embodying or illustrating certain ideas that had taken a leading place in the minds of the Jewish people. In other words, we are to consider the Gospel history as containing certain very diminutive facts, narrated so as to suit ideas which the writers, in common with all their countrymen, had treasured up in their hearts. The history is partly mythical and partly legendary: *mythical*, when something narrated as a fact has thus sprung out of an idea; and *legendary*, when real persons or acts are described, but in connexion with some ideas which have entirely influenced or coloured the narrative. Strauss thus ventures to assert that in the Gospels we find simply a collection of mythical and legendary narratives, some of which have no historical basis at all, and are only valuable as recording the ideas which the Church of the first century formed respecting Christ! whilst others, although possessing an historical element, are more or less perverted by the influence of the same idea. In other words, the Gospels contain, not an honest and true record of the facts connected with man's redemption, but simply the religious ideas and national hopes of the Jews "projected into facts!" Such are the wild, and we must add, *credulous*, notions of Strauss. For it is assuredly the most preposterous of all theories yet invented, to imagine that the life of our blessed Lord, so "full of grace and truth," could have been suggested or formed from the fortuitous concurrence of a variety of stories, Biblical, Rabbinical, Greek, and Alexandrine! Who, but the most besottedly credulous, could believe that the character of Christ, so simple and grand, could have been formed, as this theory would persuade us, from the ideas of a few illiterate peasants? And, most preposterous of all, we are coolly asked to believe that the Saviour's system of divine doctrine, with its elements entirely new, of love, humility, submission, consolation, was created in the same chance-medley style! Yet people there are who believe, or would like to believe this, and who look all the while with becoming scorn on the credulity of others! People there are who repudiate a belief in miracles, but who fondle these trashy dreams as devotedly as if they contained any elements of stability and comfort!

The opinions of Strauss have been long since almost entirely repudiated in Germany. They have made their way, generally through American translations, into these lands, and are now exercising a partial influence in various quarters. Their influence here will only be temporary. The broad church will soon become so broad as to have no foundation at all. It has become a sort of fashion to take up new theories of Scripture interpretation, or rather new systems of Christology, as they come to us from Germany, where they are said to be thrown off "like new vases from a potter's wheel;" but this fashion, like other fashions of the world, will quickly pass away. In the mean time, however, our neologists ought to get due credit for a certain patience and courtesy which they undoubtedly exercise in their anxiety to "hear some new thing;" for it is a fact, that they never take up a new German theory until the original inventors have quite done with it, and have thrown it away as worthless "stubble." Indeed, only after the language has been translated in which the theory was originally promulgated, do they come gravely forward to adopt the new theological fashion, and recommend it to a few cronies, as suited in all points to the wants of the human heart. We caution them, however, not to be too cordially taken on with any particular system yet come to hand, as they little dream of the number still on the way. The *Versöhnung* of Baur details the many views of Christ and his Gospel which have been put forward in Germany, even since the notorious publications of Strauss.

These puny attempts to disfigure or set aside the Gospel of our salvation only recoil on the heads of those who make them. Every age accumulates evidence as it passes, that Christ has founded his church upon the rock of *Truth*. Verily, other foundation can no man lay than that is laid already and forever in spiritual things. Let us "look unto Jesus and learn of *him*. He is "the same yesterday, to-day, and forever." He is not the *ignis fatuus* which unbelieving critics would have us to suppose. We must stand fast *in* the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free; but we dare not use this liberty as a cloak whilst insanely sitting in judgment on Christ's words and works. It is our unquestionable duty to prove all things and hold

fast that which is good; but the faith once delivered to the saints is that good and glorious inheritance which we must steadily "hold fast." Those who claim to be Christians are required to submit to the authority of Christ, but their professed discipleship gives them no right whatever to reject any portion of his message, or pretend to alter, in any respect, the objects of his mission. If we believe in our hearts, or rather *feel* in our hearts, that what the law could not do, and what philosophic systems never can do, the Gospel has really accomplished, then why let this anchor of the soul go, to drift over we know not what dreary seas of darkness and doubt. The religion of Jesus is TRUTH in its holiest and most pre-eminent sense; our hearts acknowledge it, and it has been discovered and settled for ages. We are not called on, therefore, to accept the challenge of every charlatan to re-examine its foundations, or to put Christ on his trial in every generation, with a view to determine whether he was a fanatic or impostor, or, indeed, whether he ever existed at all. We will rather test these theories by the "truth as it is in Jesus," and when they fail to coincide with it, or impudently presume to question it, we shall listen to no vapid declamation in their support.

C. S.

THE NORTHERN PRESBYTERY OF ANTRIM.

OUR Intelligence department this month contains an account of the withdrawal of five congregations from the Presbytery of Antrim, and of the organization of a new Presbytery, which embodies the Christian and liberal principles avowed and maintained by their ancestors in 1726, and therefore appropriately retains the ancient name, but with the particular title of "Northern," in order to distinguish it from the residuary body. It may not be out of place to review very briefly the circumstances which led to this disruption, and to the painful discussion which preceded it.

About fifteen years ago the York Street Congregation seemed to pass through a remarkable change, and to exhibit, in a very unmistakeable way, evidences of what

is commonly known as “advanced thought” in religious matters. Two leading members of the congregation held most extreme views, and they seemed not only to lead the people but the minister too, so that he gave expression in the pulpit to the most startling opinions. Farther, in two publications—first, the *Truth-Seeker*, issued ostensibly for the discussion of theological and religious questions, but really for the propagation of rationalistic views, and afterwards the *Beth-Berei Magazine*, avowedly the organ of the congregation, and published for its benefit—an effort was made to spread this “new light” in the community; while the publications of Theodore Parker were offered for sale in the church. These proceedings led to painful apprehensions on the part of the best friends of the minister and his congregation, and to severe criticism on the part of many outside our denomination. One reverend gentleman, prompted by the kindest motives, remonstrated with the minister in a friendly way, and only brought down upon himself an ill-tempered rebuke for presuming to advise that he should cushion his convictions. Years then passed on; it was thought, and perhaps truly, that the minister, as he grew older, thought more soberly, and abandoned the wild opinions which, in a period of excitement, and under the influence of injudicious and rationalistic advisers, he had broached. A New Code was the subject of much deliberation in the Remonstrant Synod, and possibly the painful rumours that had prevailed in connexion with the York Street Congregation may have led them, in passing it, to endeavour to guard against the introduction of rationalistic or deistical ministers into their Church. Hence the questions that were introduced respecting the Divine revelation contained in the Scriptures, and respecting the Divine mission of Christ. The York Street minister warmly opposed the questions, and argued that the only question that should be asked was—“Are you a disciple of Christ?” Now observe, that a man could answer that question though he considered Christ to have no higher authority than Solon, or Plato, or Confucius. The Christianity of the Synod’s principles was declared by the votes of the majority; but the minority, led on by the York Street minister, kept up a continued agitation, and denounced these questions as “human

tests." Some time ago the York Street pulpit became vacant—not because, as has been most incorrectly said, the minister was driven away by persecution, but because he got a better place. The Committee of the Congregation, finding that their new minister must distinctly express to the Presbytery his belief in Christ's Divine mission, and in the Scriptures as containing a Divine revelation, determined to withdraw and seek admission into the Presbytery of Antrim.

The Commissioners who represented the York Street Congregation at the meeting of the Antrim Presbytery, when they sought to be taken under its care, distinctly declared that they would not allow the Presbytery to ask the minister any questions. Several members, seeing that the admission of this congregation, in such circumstances and on such terms, would be a violation of the principles on which the Presbytery was founded, and would tend to open the pulpits of its churches to unbelievers, strongly opposed the motion for their admission: but in vain; a majority, and that majority increased by most unfair means, decided that the York Street Congregation be admitted. Against that decision, and against proceedings connected with the meeting, Three Protests were in due time given in, and at the next stated meeting of Presbytery, a resolution was offered by one of the minority, intended to vindicate the Christian character of the body, and remove the painful apprehensions which, reasonably or unreasonably, had arisen in the minds of some of the brethren. That resolution simply declared that no candidate should be licensed, ordained, or installed, who did not distinctly avow his belief in Christ's Divine mission, and in the Divine revelation contained in the Scriptures. We are sure that there is not a congregation connected with the Presbytery that would not support such a resolution; but those who represented the majority of the congregations, ministers and elders (some of them, indeed, not elders, not even communicants in the Church), rejected it "with indignation." There was but one course left for the minority, and that course they have taken in seceding from the Presbytery, and organising themselves into a new Church, under the name of the Northern Presbytery of Antrim.

Some, we know, regard this proceeding as unnecessary, and think that the apprehension of deistical opinions finding their way into our pulpits is without foundation; but such persons have not been observing the tendencies which, for some time, have plainly manifested themselves in our denomination. Hear on this subject the testimony of an English Unitarian minister, as given in the last number of the *Westminster Review*:—

“The howl of horror which greeted Theodore Parker is familiar to all. Yet, they who cut him off, said nearly the same things in a more misty and roundabout fashion, and his crime consisted in plain speaking as much as in theological heresy. It was American narrowness, however, that persecuted him, and Lancashire invited him to her pulpits when those of Massachusetts were closed. . . . At present, here and in America, the Boston heretic’s interpretation of Christianity bids fair to become, in the main, the dominant thought in the Unitarian Church.”

It is well known that Parker spurned the idea of Christ being his Master, and regarded the miracles only as so many fables. Yet here is evidence, perhaps not correct, but still, we may presume, honestly given, by a prominent minister of the Unitarian Church in England, that Christianity among the English brethren is fast drifting into Parkerism. To guard against tendencies so dangerous, and to maintain the authority of the Christian revelation in conjunction with the utmost freedom in the interpretation of Scripture, is the main object of the new Presbytery, as it was of those who, more than one hundred and thirty years ago, founded the ancient Presbytery of Antrim.

DID I believe, what Trinitarianism teaches, that not the least transgression, not even the first sin of the dawning mind of the child, can be remitted without an infinite expiation, I should feel myself living under a legislation unspeakably dreadful, under laws written, like Draco’s, in blood; and, instead of thanking the Sovereign for providing an infinite substitute, I should shudder at the attributes which render this expedient necessary.—*Channing.*

THE BLESSINGS OF THE PRESENT AGE.

BY JOHN YOUNG, LL.D.

WE propose very briefly to estimate the degree of excellence to which society in the present day has attained, and thus train ourselves to thankfulness for the blessings enjoyed. The recluse, who lives only in the past, is surely mistaken in his judgment. There is a living, stirring present poured all around him, that might well fill up the measure of his desires, and give play enough to his highest activities.

Of this active present, no doubt, the most prominent characteristic is the immense accumulation and enlargement of knowledge. Every subject that offered itself to human investigation has had its discoverers and its wonderful unfoldings. Nature is explored from centre to circumference; the rocks have found a tongue, and tell us their ages and their changes. The whole materials of our globe have cast themselves into the crucible, and change their forms as at the bidding of an enchanter. The world of life is searched and known at last. The storehouse is unlocked from which nature brings forth the coloured garments of her summer wear. Then, from the moth up to man, the habits, laws, and mechanism of the animal races are matters of sober history. The caves of ocean are no longer unfathomed; the air is plastic in our hands; and the lightnings come and go at our command. Modern education is indeed a serious labour. No wonder that the timid shrink back, and fear to scale the empyrean height. Think only of the ten thousand spellings and readings, the countings and denominations, the Grammars and the Dictionaries, the measuring line of mechanics and the eternal weighings of the chemist; then the airy speculations of Kant and the hard sensationalism of Locke. To this wonderful mass shall we add the laws of nations, and the ethical and biblical foundation on which all duty rests. Here, indeed, are treasures of wisdom and knowledge which ancient eye saw not, neither could it enter into their hearts to conceive. Here lie before us the accumulated discoveries of all past ages, and of the great lights of all time. The results are

only beginning to appear. Straight paths are made through the trackless ocean. We speak from one end of heaven to the other. Soils once given to barrenness yield to the cultivator a large increase. Hunger and thirst are known no more, for there may be bread enough for all the people. Cruel punishments are away. The rack has racked itself to pieces. The faggots make gas or steam, but they burn up humanity no longer. Law, too, has laid aside her angry vengeance, and looks for support and encouragement to the labours of the teacher rather than the sword of the executioner. The diseases that flesh is heir to have been studied and classified; and if they cannot always be conquered by pure force, sure we are that they generally capitulate before starvation.

Anatomy and surgery have won for themselves immortal honour. The crooked are soon made straight. The maimed are dosed with chloroform, or soothed to slumber by mesmeric passes, and wake to find their limbs are off, without experiencing the torture of the knife or saw. New teeth, new eyes, new nose, new hair, and almost new humanity itself, are the magic wonders of art guided by science. The only problem yet unsolved in this department is the way to turn old age into youth; but our friends the quacks come often so near it in their flaming placards, that we may feel easy in the hopes that it shall be discovered before we become too old to bear the transformation. As the present is an age of knowledge, so it is also noted for its intense activity. The world is marched over now by splendid armies, carrying desolation in their course; anon by bands of peaceful emigrants, bearing with them their household gods, and determined, with brave hearts and stout arms, to place themselves in positions favourable for the full development of their physical and moral nature. The old and worn out portions of the world are left to the moles and to the bats, until length of years shall recuperate their fertility; and the glorious garden fields of the Western world, that have been receiving the fertilizing deposits of ages, are now pouring forth riches such as earth has not furnished before. There is no pause or resting-place yet visible in this labour of civilization. One invention presses upon the step of another. The canals were scarcely finished

until they became useless by the superior speed of the railroad.

If prophecy committed itself to the hazard of declaring that many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased, it certainly has not been dishonoured by the result. Nor are these changes confined to one or two leading nations. Even the tribes that sit in darkness are beginning to see the dawn of day. Knowledge and power and art are all contagious. When one nation throws off the yoke of ages, and goes forth redeemed, others are awaked by the song of jubilee. Their chains then become galling, and one after another will break their bonds. The throes of revolution spreading from the American Republic were felt too soon in Europe, before knowledge had fitted the people for real liberty. The consequence was such as all wise men foresaw, the inauguration of a few years' more rigid despotism than before; but this fiery ordeal is now purifying true spirits. The true principles of political happiness are not suffering by the delay, but are laying themselves broad and deep, not now in the minds of a few philosophers, but in the hearts of toiling millions.

One of the instruments of evil by which ignorance was perpetuated in past times was national prejudice and antipathy. By this means discoveries and arts were pent up in the country that gave them birth; and walls of animosity, and bulwarks of protection and national jealousy, were raised up all around.

The author of Christianity saw this evil, and set his face firmly against it. He visited gladly the towns of the Samaritans; he highly commended the faith of a Syro-Phœnician woman and a Gentile officer. He broke through the class distinctions which bigotry had engendered in his own country, and taught his disciples to toil and labour for the enlightenment of all the world. Only now are we beginning, after eighteen hundred years, to become intelligent enough to understand the true nature of this noble religion.

America and England,—one in race, one in language, one in religion and philosophy,—emancipated from those bitter prejudices of barbarous times, and from the unhappy reminiscences of modern strife, should go lovingly

to work to teach the nations of the earth that men are brethren. True, some yet of both families are hanging back amidst the shadows of the past, and gravely intimating that love for other nations is treachery to our own. Poor fools! In them it might be true; for their hearts are doubtless too narrow to enfold even one nation with a true patriot's love. While we thus rebuke the antipathies of nations, what shall we say of the hatreds engendered by religion? Only this, that we glory in their destruction. How a religion of freedom, peace, and love could foster discord and dislike, we leave for wise men to develop.

A common Bible, a common Saviour, and a common Heaven, form a partnership property that may well smooth all asperities in Protestant Christendom; and assuredly it is doing so. The wise men of this age are not buckling on their armour for bitter theological gladiatorship. These were the days of childhood; but when they rise to the stature of full men, they put away childish things. They now gird themselves to lift up the low, to give bread to the hungry soul, and, if there be any other good work undone, to serve both God and man by doing it. May the great Saviour pity and pardon those who, in his name, have preached the forms and ceremonies that he despised; who have stirred up the hatred that he came to earth to allay and soothe; and have spent their time in damning their neighbours, when they should have been blessing and praying for them. Religion has been more harped upon during the last three hundred years than any other theme; and though advances have been made in it, perhaps it is in a less advanced condition than any department of human knowledge.

WE rarely have the opportunity of exercising virtue or avoiding vice on a large scale. Our path does not lie among important affairs and great occasions. And if we think it of consequence to watch and act only on great occasions, we shall inevitably pass the chief portion of our time without doing anything to keep or form a virtuous character.—*H. Ware.*

INTELLIGENCE.

THE REV. WILLIAM BRUCE, AND THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CONGREGATION, BELFAST.

ON the 2nd of March, 1862, the Rev. William Bruce completed the fiftieth year of his ministry in connexion with the First Presbyterian Congregation, Belfast, and the members of his flock determined to mark the occasion by a suitable testimonial of their esteem, respect, and affection for their beloved pastor. Never was a tribute of grateful attachment more deserved, and never was any proposition more cordially responded to by any people than was the suggestion of presenting to Mr. Bruce some expression of the feelings called forth by his long and faithful labours in the pastorate. The Address from the congregation, which we give below, speaks for itself, in words becoming the occasion—words of simple truth and earnest soberness. The Reply will be read with touching interest. In addition to their Address, the congregation determined to present some abiding mark of their esteem and affection; and, having reason to believe that none would be more acceptable to Mr. Bruce's family than a memorial in the meeting-house in which he has so long officiated, and in which his venerable father had for more than fifty years exercised his ministry, they decided on erecting a stained glass window—or rather three windows, a large central and two smaller side-lights, behind but also above the pulpit—with appropriate pictorial subjects taken from the New Testament, and suitable embellishments. Artists of first-rate eminence have already furnished designs; and there can be no doubt that the result will be a work of art, tasteful and elegant in itself, in perfect harmony with the architecture of the building in which it will be placed, and most appropriate as a means of transmitting to future generations the sentiments of which it is the recording symbol.

The following Address, which had been agreed upon at a full congregational meeting held on the previous Sunday, was presented to Mr. Bruce, at the close of divine service, on Sunday the 2nd of March, 1862. Valentine Whitla, Esq., occupied the chair; and the Address was read by W. J. C. Allen, Esq., the Treasurer of the congregation:—

“REV. AND DEAR SIR,—Half-a-century is this day completed since you were solemnly set apart to minister in holy things to the Congregation assembling in this place of worship.

“Notwithstanding the vicissitudes incident to so long a professional career, you have pursued the even tenor of your way, having neither been lulled into a state of apathetic indifference by the calm which pervaded the religious world in the earlier period of your ministry, nor dismayed by the storms which have, from time to time, during its latter years, raged around our Zion. Under all the varying circumstances of the times, you have proved yourself a

faithful and "good soldier of Jesus Christ," maintaining, with unflinching firmness, those views of Divine truth which a careful and constant study of the Sacred Records has recommended to your own mind ; and enforcing, with affectionate earnestness, as well as illustrating in your walk and conversation, those graces and virtues which adorn the Christian character.

"For more than two centuries before your entering on the pastoral office, there had existed in your family an unbroken line of distinguished ministers of the Gospel—men who occupied a prominent position in the Church, as the zealous defenders of religious truth, and the uncompromising advocates of that "liberty wherewith Christ had made His people free." To find a parallel for such a family in history, in your own or any other profession, would be difficult, if not impossible. Worthy successor of those great and good men, you have not been contented to repose under your ancestral laurels ; you have rather been stimulated by the example of your forefathers, and have followed with unfaltering steps the path which they had marked out.

"The Congregation are aware that, in the consciousness of duty faithfully discharged, you have what is to yourself the most satisfactory reward to your labours ; still, they feel that they would fail in what they owe to you, and yet more in what they owe to themselves, if they did not, at this interesting epoch, give some expression, however inadequate, of their appreciation of your worth. They have, therefore, determined to erect in this house, which is the scene of your Ministry, and with which you have, besides, other interesting and sacred associations, a testimonial of their affection and esteem for you as their Pastor. While, by this means, they declare to their contemporaries their feelings of love and respect for you, they will, at the same time, transmit to the future generations of worshippers who shall come up to this house to worship the one God and Father of all in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, a memorial of your long and earnest labours for the promotion of God's glory and the advancement of His kingdom upon earth.

"That it may please the Almighty Disposer of all events to grant you yet many years of usefulness and happiness in the midst of your family and people, and that you may have many "for a crown of rejoicing" "in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming," is the sincere and fervent prayer of your grateful and attached congregation.

"(Signed on behalf of the Congregation),

G. K. SMITH, *Secretary.*

"BELFAST, *March 2, 1862.*"

To this Address, Mr. Bruce gave the following Reply :—

"MY DEAR FRIENDS,—The lapse of half-a-century, occupied in the Christian Ministry, naturally gives rise to many serious and solemn reflections.

"Memory recurs to times and seasons long past, and dwells in affectionate recollections of former intercourse with the wise and good, whose very names are, perhaps, unknown to most among you. It recalls the images of many who have gone before, and who

walked in a manner "worthy of the vocation wherewith they were called."

"It particularly recalls, at present, the image of him who last stood in this place to experience a similar gratification, thirty-one years ago; whose wisdom and reputation supplied my deficiencies, and compensated for my shortcomings; as the latter period of my ministry has enjoyed the co-operation of my highly-valued colleague, whose vigour and energy, ability and zeal, I need not expatiate on to you.

"But the most vivid of all my recollections is that of my own deficiencies. I say it not in affectation, but in sober truth. The consciousness haunts me, more especially when contrasted with your too partial estimate, and when I look back on what I now think, with more energetic exertion, I might have accomplished. From this consciousness I cannot be released, even by those most kind and gratifying expressions which I have now heard, and which would stimulate me to more active exertions, did not our Heavenly Father limit the sphere of our mental activity by the bodily infirmities of age.

"Amidst all my regrets, however, you, in that kindness for which I most sincerely thank you, have provided me with the happy thought that, however I may have failed to you, you have not been wanting to me in the continuance of that affection and regard which I have experienced through the whole course of my ministry, but which some recent events in our history have rendered of peculiar value, and which have consoled and refreshed me, when old and long-cherished associations have been rudely disrupted, and I have been forced to prefer separation to the dereliction of a sacred duty and violation of a solemn trust. I thank you, too, for the happy and very gratifying mode you have adopted of perpetuating the expression of your feelings.

"But, when I reflect that of those heads of families or seatholders, whose names were in my earliest list of the Congregation, only one or two remain—that even their successors, who were my fellow-worshippers, and at least my equals in health and strength, have been mostly removed from this scene, and that I am now ministering to the third, and even to the fourth generation of some of those families, I cannot, without great presumption, look forward to those "many years of usefulness and happiness" that you so kindly wish me to enjoy.

"And now to relieve you from these personal matters into which you have beguiled me, and on which I have dwelt too long, I congratulate you on the prosperous condition of our worshipping society. It is "my heart's desire and prayer to God" that you may "follow on" to prosper, and that we may all put forth our energies for the promotion of that sober-minded view of the Christian doctrine which, using our Christian liberty, we have always preached, and that is equally removed from that vagueness which, resting in equivocal expressions, and shunning an open declaration, makes little or no distinction between belief and unbelief on the one hand; and, on the other, from that dogmatical decision of dubious questions beyond what is written, that has so often proved an insuper-

able impediment to accepting those glad tidings of salvation that are congenial to our best feelings, commend themselves to our soundest reason, and are so efficacious towards promoting religiousness of life, as well as providing true consolation and assured hope at its close. And it is the most delightful earthly prospect that I can have, that generation after generation shall be found maintaining this house, and preserving the religious truths that have so long distinguished it, ever fresh and ever "effectually working" in them to their everlasting good.

"WILLIAM BRUCE."

We may be permitted to add our congratulations to those expressed in the Address to Mr. Bruce. We congratulate him on the affection and harmony which subsist between him and his flock ; and on the fact that events which have in so many other quarters produced estrangement and dissension, have apparently only deepened the sympathy felt for him by the members of his congregation. We congratulate his people, and the cause of which he is so prominent a support, on their possessing in him a minister whose personal and professional character have been continually rising in public estimation during the whole course of his ministerial life ; and whose intellectual and bodily vigour, notwithstanding the half-century of active service to which he refers, give promise of many years of useful and honourable labour in the vineyard of God. May the hopes and wishes so feelingly expressed in the Address be more than realized, to the glory of God, the good of the Church, and the temporal and spiritual happiness of all concerned.

REMONSTRANT SYNOD.—PEACE CONFERENCE.

On Friday, the 14th March, at the suggestion of several ministers of the Remonstrant Synod of Ulster, who looked upon the difference of views between the majority and minority of that body, on the subject of license and ordination, to be more nominal than real, a Conference was held to consider the best means of restoring harmony and co-operation to their Church. Ten ministers, fairly representing the opinions of the several parties, were present, and all appeared to be animated by a conciliatory spirit.

On the part of the minority, it was stated, that their objections were not based upon any dissent from the *Principles* implied in the three questions contained in the new Code of Discipline, with regard to candidates for license or ordination, but solely to the authority of Presbyteries to *ask* those questions, which seemed to imply a right to interfere with the free choice of congregations. They admitted, however, that, in licensing or ordaining a *Christian* minister, Presbyteries were bound in duty to ascertain, so far as they could, that the candidate acknowledged the *Divine authority* of Christianity—for which purpose *one* question would be quite enough, viz., a question implying "the sufficiency of Scripture as containing a Divine revelation, and the right of private judgment in its interpretation." This one question, the *second* in the Code of Discipline, it was not unfairly urged, embraced the *first* and the *third* questions.

The majority, duly appreciating this evidence of fairness and conciliation on the part of their brethren, and never having contended for anything more than a recognition of the *Divine Authority* of Christianity, without reference to any *peculiar views of doctrine*, cordially acquiesced in the suggested plan of terminating all disputes; and, after mutual and satisfactory explanations, the following agreement was unanimously adopted, viz. :—

“BELFAST, *March 14, 1862.*

“At a meeting for Friendly Conference, held in Belfast this day, the undersigned agreed, for the sake of peace and conciliation, to recommend, at the approaching meeting of Synod, that, instead of the three questions of the Code, the following alone should be asked of candidates for ordination or installation, in any case where the Congregation or Minister about to be appointed should desire it,—viz., ‘Do you believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament contain a divine revelation; and do you receive them as the only sufficient rule of faith and practice, to the exclusion of all human creeds and formulas of faith?’

HENRY ALEXANDER, *Moderator.*

H. MONTGOMERY.

WILLIAM CROZIER.

JAMES MULLIGAN.

JOHN M'CAW.

JOHN MONTGOMERY.

WILLIAM HALL.

ROBERT CAMPBELL.

JOHN ORR.

FRANKLIN BRADLEY.”

It was understood that candidates for license, who may express a conscientious objection to answer the *three* questions of the Code, shall be licensed to preach the Gospel, on simply giving an affirmative answer to the *one* question set forth above.

We are confident that the preceding agreement will be carried out in good faith; and, as it involves no sacrifice of principle on *either side*—no triumph or humiliation to *any party*—we trust that it will be universally hailed, both by ministers and people, as a panacea for past evils, and as the harbinger of future peace and co-operation in a really untrammelled *Christian Church*.

DISRUPTION OF THE PRESBYTERY OF ANTRIM, AND ORGANIZATION OF A NEW PRESBYTERY.

Immediately after the meeting of this body, which took place on January 5th, and of which we gave a condensed but faithful report in our February number, several ministers and congregations determined to withdraw. A meeting of the Larne Congregation was held on January 12th, at which it was resolved that, in consequence of recent events in the Presbytery, they would withdraw from it, and form some other ecclesiastical connexion. Similar proceedings took place in the 1st Belfast Congregation on January 19th, in Holywood Congregation on February 2nd, and in Antrim Congregation on February 16th. In Ballyclare Congregation also, a majority of the seatholders carried a resolution to the same effect on February 2nd, although the minister desires to remain with the Presbytery.

It was only right that matters of so grave importance, affecting the deepest interests of Christian congregations, should thus have been without delay submitted to the lay members of the Churches, and their decision sought. We are not surprised that the congregations we have named should have, without hesitation, resolved to leave the Presbytery of Antrim, endeared though it was to them by old and hallowed associations, when, under the name of religious liberty, its most sacred principles were set at nought. A correspondent reasonably inquires "whether the Revs. S. C. Nelson, John Porter, D. Watson, H. Moore, and D. Gordon have appealed to their congregations, and asked them whether the simple admission of being a Christian is a sufficient criterion of fitness for the office of a Christian teacher and pastor to a congregation—whether they think that a congregation, having chosen a minister without any reference to the Presbytery, should have the power of forcing the Presbytery to admit him into their body without any inquiry into his fitness for the office—whether, by allowing the minister-elect to be asked as to his taking the Scriptures as his rule of faith, and objecting to his being asked whether he believes them to contain a Divine revelation, they mean him to take the Scriptures as a rule of man's composition in the same sense as the Athanasian Creed, the Thirty-Nine Articles, or the Westminster Confession; and if not containing a Divine revelation, in what other light can they be considered."

A meeting, convened by circular, was held in the vestry of the First Presbyterian Congregation, Belfast, on February 21st, consisting of representatives from the several Congregations that had resolved to withdraw from the jurisdiction of the Presbytery of Antrim, viz., Antrim, Ballyclare, 1st Belfast, Holywood, and Larne. The Rev. W. Bruce was appointed to preside as chairman, and the Rev. J. Scott Porter to act as Secretary. The resolutions of the different Congregations, declaring their determination to leave the Presbytery of Antrim, were read and considered. A letter was read from the Rev. John Hall, of Ballyclare, stating that he "was attached to the Presbytery of Antrim, and had not the most distant desire to leave the connexion." The minutes of the meetings of the Presbytery of Antrim, held on the 6th Nov., 1861, on the 1st January, 1862, and on the 4th February, 1862, also the entry of the installation of the Rev. James M'Ferran in the Congregation of Antrim, were read, and ordered to be inserted in the minutes of the meeting. The Propositions submitted to the General Synod of Ulster at Dungannon, in 1726, by the Presbytery of Antrim, and published by them in their Narrative of Seven General Synods, were read, and the following Resolutions, after mature deliberation, were unanimously passed:—

That we do hereby express and record our adherence to the Six Propositions submitted to the General Synod of Ulster by the Presbytery of Antrim in the year 1726, with the exception of the following words in the latter part of Prop. IV., viz.:—"Though we scruple not to give our public advice and recommendation to parents, at the baptism of their children, seriously to peruse the Westminster Confession and Catechisms as a good summary of the main heads of the Christian doctrine; comparing them with the

Word of God, that their faith stand not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God; and that they would use them as good helps for their growth in knowledge, and for instructing their children."

That we do hereby express and record our approbation of the Three Protests handed in at the meeting of the Presbytery of Antrim, held on January 1st, 1862; and our adherence to the Motion proposed by the Rev. C. J. M'Alester at the same meeting, which was "rejected with indignation."

That, subject to the approval and confirmation of those to whom the right of granting or withholding such confirmation is reserved by the Congregational Resolutions read at this meeting, a distinct ecclesiastical body be now formed upon the principles, and maintaining the Presbyterian usages, set forth in the foregoing Propositions, Protests, and Motion; that such body include the Congregations represented at this meeting, with their ministers, and such other Congregations adhering to the same principles and usages as may hereafter be admitted thereto; and that it be called the Northern Presbytery of Antrim.

Resolutions were next passed appointing the Rev. W. Bruce Moderator, and the Rev. J. S. Porter, Clerk, for the next twelve months; and also fixing the time for holding the stated meetings of Presbytery.

The following resolution was then passed:—

"That on this solemn and to us deeply interesting occasion, we feel ourselves called on to record, in the most explicit terms, our allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ as the great King and Head of the Church; our acknowledgment of the Sufficiency of Scripture as the Rule of Faith and Worship; our assertion of the right and duty of Private Judgment on all religious questions, unfettered by any Creeds, Articles, or Confessions of Faith composed by fallible men; and our rejection of all human authority in matters of faith."

A Committee of Presbytery was then appointed to prepare the draught of a body of rules for the transaction of Presbyterian business, in accordance with the original laws and usages of the ancient Presbytery of Antrim; also to make such representations to the Government as may seem necessary for securing their civil rights, and obtaining their official recognition as a distinct ecclesiastical body.

We have since learned that Government has acceded to the prayer of a memorial that the Northern Presbytery of Antrim should be recognized as a distinct and independent body, and enjoy all the privileges which they possessed in their former connexion; and its organization is thus rendered complete.

It is arranged, we believe, that the inaugural meeting shall be held in the First Meeting-House, Belfast, on the first Friday of April; that it shall be introduced by a public religious service; that the Moderator shall preach a sermon suitable to the occasion; and that a short series of Resolutions, containing a summary of the foundation-principles of the body, shall be brought forward with a view to disseminate a knowledge of those principles as widely as possible, both among our own people and Christians of other Churches.

LONDON DISTRICT UNITARIAN SOCIETY.—THE BICENTENARY
OF 1662.

On Friday evening, the 10th March, a meeting of the members and friends of the London District Unitarian Society was held at Radley's Hotel, for the purpose of discussing the Bicentenary Celebration of the Two Thousand Nonconforming Ministers of 1662. The meeting was numerously attended. James Heywood, Esq., M.A., F.R.S., presided.

The Rev. S. Bache, Dr. Russell, and T. Kenrick, Esq., of Birmingham, attended as a deputation from the Ministers' Benevolent Society, and were very cordially received.

Mr. HERWOOD, on taking the chair, said that the meeting had been called for the purpose of discussing, for the second time, the Act of Uniformity, passed in 1662. At the last meeting a committee, the members of which represented the Unitarian body of London generally, was appointed on the subject. That committee divided itself into three sub-committees. The first of these had under its consideration the question of the augmentation of ministers' stipends. Considerable exertions had been made by that committee. Mr. Shaen was carrying on the correspondence on that subject, and when the subject was sufficiently matured, a report would be made to a future meeting. There was a deputation from Birmingham present, consisting of the Rev. Mr. Bache, Dr. Russell, and Mr. Kenrick. They were members of the Ministers' Benevolent Society, a society which had a fund of £8,000 for the relief of indigent ministers and their families, and he believed they would on this occasion present their claims to the meeting. He hoped that between the Augmentation Fund and the Ministers' Benevolent Society something would result to the advantage of both. The second sub-committee considered the subject of lectures, and a good deal had been done by them. The Rev. Brook Aspland acted as secretary to that committee, and the programme of the course of lectures showed that lectures were to be delivered in five chapels in the spring, on the subject of the Act of Uniformity, or matters immediately connected with that Act. The first lecture was to be delivered on the 27th of April, by the Rev. Brook Aspland—subject, "Historical Sketch of the Antecedents and immediate Consequences of the Act of Uniformity in 1662;" the second, by the Rev. Henry Ierson—subject, "The Refusal of Conformity by the Ejected Ministers considered in relation to the general Principles of Religious Liberty;" the third, by the Rev. James Martineau—subject, "Nonconformity in its relation to the Progressive Element of English Society;" the fourth, by the Rev. John James Tayler—subject, "The Character of Richard Baxter, and his Influence on the ensuing Development of English Nonconformity;" the fifth, by the Rev. Charles Wicksteed (a lineal descendant of Philip Henry)—subject, "Puritan Life in the Seventeenth Century: a Sketch of Philip Henry, in his Domestic, Ministerial, and Ecclesiastical Relations." These lectures were to be delivered at Hampstead, Hackney, Portland street, Brixton, and Islington School-room. The third sub-committee, of which he himself was the secretary, considered the subject of parliamentary action. They had not yet

come before Parliament, but there was an interesting matter taken up by the committee—a case of grievance which occurred in our own day. Two young men, Mr. Stirling and Mr. Aldis, were senior wranglers at Cambridge in 1860 and 1861, but both declined to come forward for fellowships in Trinity College, because they could not subscribe to the test of uniformity. As senior wranglers, they were certain of becoming fellows, but they could not subscribe the test. (Hear.) It was a great loss to the College itself that they could not be enrolled amongst the fellows. Many fellows signed a petition to Parliament on the subject. He believed sixty-three signed the petition, and amongst them were Dr. Sedgwick and Dr. Clarke, the public orator of the College. Lord Taunton would present the petition to the House of Lords, and a member of the House of Commons would present it in that assembly.

The meeting was also addressed by Revs. S. Bache, R. B. Aspland, J. P. Ham, T. L. Marshall, H. Ierson, Alderman Lawrence, and others.

ADDRESS OF CONDOLENCE TO THE QUEEN FROM THE
NON-SUBSCRIBING PRESBYTERIANS IN IRELAND.

The following address of condolence to the Queen, on the death of her Consort, has been forwarded to Sir George Grey, for presentation to her Majesty, from the Non-Subscribing Association of Presbyterians in Ireland:—

“TO THE QUEEN’S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY.

“MAY IT PLEASE YOUR MAJESTY,—We, your Majesty’s dutiful and loving subjects, the ministers and elders constituting the Committee of the Association of Non-Subscribing Presbyterians of Ireland, most humbly beg leave to tender to your Majesty the assurance of our deep sympathy under the affliction which it has pleased the Almighty God to lay on your Majesty, in removing from this life your beloved Consort, his Royal Highness the late Prince Albert.

“Your Majesty’s tender and affectionate heart must feel acutely the loss of one whose talents, virtues, and dispositions have so long blessed your domestic life. It may be some consolation to your Majesty to know that, while on yourself the blow has fallen most heavily, you have, on this occasion, the whole British nation as fellow-mourners. In every corner of your widely-extended empire the enlarged philanthropy of his Royal Highness—his clear insight into the true sources of national greatness, and his strenuous exertions to develope them—his anxiety to promote the spread of science, education, and all the arts of peace, were known and appreciated. By these qualities he was endeared to the hearts of all your Majesty’s subjects; and his name will be handed down to future ages as one who nobly exerted, for the good of mankind, the large means of usefulness with which he was endowed.

“May Almighty God strengthen and console your Majesty under this severe trial. May he sustain you by his grace and guide you by his counsel. May he vouchsafe to your Majesty that abundant consolation which flows from the blessed truths and the glorious

prospects of the religion of Christ Jesus, and bestow upon you every spiritual mercy in time and in eternity.

"Signed in the name, and on behalf of the Association of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterians of Ireland,

"DAVID GORDON, *President*.

"HUGH MOORE, *Hon. Secretary*."

The following is the Reply of the Home Secretary :—

"WHITEHALL, 13th February, 1862.

"SIR,—I have had the honour to lay before the Queen the loyal and dutiful address of the Committee of the Association of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterians of Ireland, on the occasion of the death of his Royal Highness the Prince Consort, and I have to inform you that her Majesty was pleased to receive the address very graciously.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant, "G. GREY.

"The President of the Association of Non-Subscribing Presbyterians of Ireland."

SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS' UNION.—A meeting of the teachers connected with the above union was held in the vestry of the Second Congregation, Belfast, on the evening of the 27th November, when the subject, "What Class-books should we use?" was introduced by the Rev. H. Eachus, and was spoken to by the Rev. C. J. M'Alester (Holywood), Mr. T. A. Hill, and most of the teachers present. The unanimous conclusion to which the teachers came was, that whatever books subsidiary to the Bible would aid them in their work, and make their religious lessons more plain, instructive, and forcible, might very profitably be employed; but more depended on the spirit of the teacher than on the books used.—Another meeting was held on the evening of Monday, the 23d of December, when the subject for conversation was, "Our Duties as Sunday School Teachers," introduced by Mr. T. A. Hill, one of the teachers of the Domestic Mission School. The subject was brought before the meeting in a very forcible and impressive manner. He urged the necessity of attention to punctuality, preparation of lessons, and, above all, the cultivation of the true Christian spirit on the part of the teachers. He was followed by the Rev. C. J. M'Alester, Rev. H. Eachus, Dr. Young, and several of the teachers present. Dr. Young gave a most interesting account of his connexion with Sunday Schools, and said he regarded them as the best institutions for the instruction and education of the young; and expressed, in a very pleasing way, his own sense of benefits received.—Another meeting took place on Wednesday evening, February the 26th, when the Rev. J. Jellie introduced, in a very interesting paper, the subject of "Music." After speaking of the good effects arising from music in general, whether in unison or harmony, the lecturer alluded to the great want of it in some of our meeting-houses, and the desirability of its cultivation in our Sunday Schools. The subject was spoken to by the Revs. C. J. M'Alester and H. Eachus; also by Messrs. W. H. Greer, R. M'Calmont, T. A. Hill, W. Spackman, Chairman, and

others. The meeting was closed with singing and prayer.—On Monday evening, March 24th, another meeting of the Sunday School Union was held in the York Street meeting-house. The attendance was larger than on any former occasion, although it did not represent so fully as might have been expected those who are engaged in the Sunday School work in the neighbourhood. The Rev. John Jellie occupied the chair, and commenced the proceedings with appropriate religious services. He then referred to the objects of the Teachers' Union, and shewed that, as there were associations for the promotion of science and the arts, and also for social and philanthropic purposes, it was right that there should be similar associations of Sunday School teachers, for the purpose of rendering their efforts in that great work more successful. He then introduced Dr. Young, American Consul for Belfast, who gave a very interesting and most instructive lecture on "Wisdom," founding his remarks on Prov. iii. 13—18. He contrasted the wisdom which is here referred to with other objects, as wealth and worldly enjoyments, which the majority of professing Christians often pursue as the chief good, and shewed that even on this earth it tended to promote happiness and length of days, while it was the true preparation for immortal bliss. He illustrated the various positions which he had laid down with singular beauty and power, and concluded with an exhortation to those engaged in Sunday School instruction to persevere in their laudable efforts to impart this heavenly wisdom to the young. The Revs. H. Eachus and C. J. M'Alester, and Mr. W. Spackman, spoke on the subject of the lecture. Mr. John Kennedy moved a vote of thanks to the lecturer, which was cordially passed; and the meeting was closed with singing and prayer.

MONEYREA CONGREGATION.—A meeting of the Remonstrant Congregation of Moneyrea was held on March 2nd, Mr. Gawn Orr in the chair, to take into consideration the present unhappy divisions which exist in the Remonstrant Synod, and determine what course they should pursue in the election of a successor to their late revered pastor, the Rev. Fletcher Blakely. A resolution was adopted, with only four seatholders dissenting, to the following effect: "That while we adhere to the fundamental principles of the Remonstrant Synod, we disapprove of them putting the questions contained in the New Code of Discipline, by which ministers are proposed to be tested at their ordination or installation, as the case may be, believing that we only have the right, as a Presbyterian Congregation, to take means for ascertaining for ourselves the religious opinions of our minister." Commissioners were then appointed to wait on the Remonstrant Presbytery of Bangor, to ascertain whether they would put the questions objected to; and in the event of their refusing to ordain or instal without putting them, to apply in the name and on behalf of the congregation, to the Presbytery of Antrim to be taken into connexion with that body.

SERMON AT TEMPLEPATRICK.—On Sunday the 16th instant, the Rev. Dr. Montgomery preached an eloquent and instructive sermon in the Old Presbyterian Church, Templepatrick, to a large and re-

spectable congregation. After the sermon a collection was made to assist in liquidating a debt incurred by the purchase of a harmonium for the use of the congregation, and by some necessary alterations in the meeting-house. The collection amounted to upwards of £45—a sum amply sufficient to meet all expenses. The following gentlemen acted as collectors:—James Campbell, Esq., Belfast; J. J. Kirkpatrick, Esq., Ballyclare; John Manderson, Esq., Crumlin; Joseph Fulton, Esq., Clonard Print Works; William Marshall, Esq., M.D., Belfast; W. J. C. Allen, Esq., J.P., Faunoran; James M'Burney, Esq., Templepatrick, and Thomas Stevenson, Esq., Palentine. James Steen, Esq., Belfast, was unable to attend, but forwarded the liberal contribution of £2. An amateur choir from Belfast gave much satisfaction by their singing—Mr. Mayne ably presiding at the harmonium.

OBITUARY.

DIED, at the house of the Rev. William Cochrane, Cradley, Worcestershire, on the 25th February, in the seventy-ninth year of his age, the Rev. Fletcher Blakely, A.M., for upwards of fifty-two years the faithful and beloved pastor of the congregation of Moneyrea. The prominent position which Mr. Blakely held in the church to which he belonged, and his earnest and successful efforts to promote the cause of *Christian Unitarianism*, demand from us more than a bare announcement of his death. He was born in Ballyroney, on the Upper Bann, and was brought up under the ministry of the Rev. Mr. Fletcher, a most excellent but rigidly Calvinistic clergyman, after whom he was called, and who often deplored the heretical opinions of his young disciple. He graduated in Glasgow College, was licensed by the Presbytery of Dromore, and was settled in the congregation of Moneyrea in September, 1809. His predecessor, the Rev. Samuel Patton, though a man of liberal views, did not preach very decidedly the doctrinal opinions which he held. Mr. Blakely, on the contrary, seems, from the time of his settlement, to have laboured to inculcate on his people the liberal and enlightened views which he had himself embraced; and about forty years ago the congregation of Moneyrea was almost the only one in the North of Ireland that was distinctly and avowedly Unitarian. He took a most important part in the great battle of religious freedom that was fought in Ulster some thirty years ago, joining with Henry Montgomery, William Porter, John Mitchel, and other excellent and able men in resisting subscription to the Westminster Confession of Faith, and opposing all human authority in religious matters. These men, and the intelligent laity whom they truly represented, clung to the Bible as their only rule of faith; and among them Fletcher Blakely was conspicuous for his manly and fearless bearing. There was in him no temporising, no shuffling, no evasion: he spoke out boldly his strong convictions, and men respected him the more for his candour. In his congregation he

was indefatigable in efforts for the temporal as well as the spiritual good of all; he was active in promoting education, and diligent in endeavouring to prevent or settle disagreements among neighbours. Mr. Blakely had the highest reverence for the Scriptures, and derived from them his religious opinions, and the precepts and promises which directed and supported him in an active but chequered life. He was a man of the warmest affections and the most tender sympathies; and several heavy bereavements befell him, which it required all his Christian faith to meet in the Christian spirit with which he bore them. While his family was yet young he lost his wife, and many years after he buried three of his children—a daughter, and two sons who held important situations in life and were full of promise. He was spared to an advanced age, but his faculties were clear almost to the last; and the venerable old man died in the house of his only surviving child, at a time when death was only a relief from bodily infirmities, and a removal to a higher life, for which we may venture to believe that his efforts in the cause of Christ—the cause of goodness, and freedom, and love on earth—were no vain preparation. He was interred in Moneyrea; a large concourse of friends attended his funeral, and an appropriate service was performed by his valued and faithful friend, the Rev. John Porter, of Belfast. On Sunday, 9th March, the Rev. S. C. Nelson, of Downpatrick, preached the funeral sermon, in Moneyrea meeting-house, before a very large congregation. Many friends of the late venerable pastor attended from Belfast and elsewhere.

On March 7th, at his residence, Twickenham, Middlesex, William Harlin, Esq., late of Rosevale, Lisburn, in his 68th year.

On March 12th, at his residence Dunmurry, James Whitla, Esq., J.P., formerly of Gobrana, Crumlin.

On March 15th, at Hill House, Newry, Mrs. Bowles, in her 84th year.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

A FRIEND has furnished us with important authorities in support of the right of Two Elders to represent in Presbytery or Synod a congregation which has Two Ministers; but the time is past for the discussion of that question, and we therefore do not publish the article.

A memoir of the late Rev. Maxwell Davidson is in type, and will be published in our next number.

Communications for the Editor, to be addressed by post to Rev. C. J. M'Alester, Holywood; or, otherwise, to 28, Arthur Street, Belfast.

Orders for the work and business communications to be sent to the Agent of the Society, 28, Arthur Street.

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MAN NOT AN ANGEL AND NOT A DEVIL.

THAT man is a sinful being, all, whatever be the form of faith which they hold, are ready to admit. What mystery hangs over the introduction and prevalence of sin! How difficult to reconcile them with the almighty power and supreme goodness of our heavenly Father! We might, indeed, expect that God would create man liable to transgress, for the capacity for doing good seems necessarily to imply a capacity for not doing good, or for doing evil. As in this life man is first in infancy, and by degrees gains strength and knowledge; so may it be designed that we should gradually reach to spiritual strength and wisdom. But why should God permit that which so fearfully militates against the present and future well-being of his children? When we consider the amount of suffering and misery that sin produces to individuals, to families, and to nations, we sometimes wonder that an overruling and beneficent providence does not interpose its power to remove the evil, and to restore peace and freedom, happiness and righteousness to the world. The earliest records in the Sacred Scriptures represent Adam, our first parent, as sinning. Then it is plain that God made him capable of sinning. We cannot regard the picture of Adam's transgression, and his expulsion from Eden, any more than we can regard the narrative of the creation, as a literal statement of incidents that really occurred; but the latter seems to be a beautiful representation of God as the wise and beneficent Creator of all; and the former a striking exhibition, in Eastern imagery, of Adam in the exercise of his free-will yielding to temp-

tation, and disobeying his God. And in that sin of Adam we see a type of all the sins that have since been committed in the world. Men believe that they will derive pleasure in one form or another from an act which they know to be contrary to the will of God; and in their desire for that pleasure they forget, or deliberately disobey God. As the Apostle James has expressed it—"Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then, when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." We find one of the sons of Adam committing murder; and, following the antediluvian history, we have, in the brief narrative that we possess, many sins and crimes recorded. The prevailing iniquity is given as the reason for a deluge that destroyed all the inhabitants of that region except the family of righteous Noah. And when the waters had abated, and the dry land became fitted for the occupation of men, and those who had survived started on a new career, sin soon re-appeared. Even Noah himself sinned, and the subsequent history abounds in crime. Not one of those whom we regard as venerable patriarchs—men of God—as Abraham, Moses, and David, is free from sins which are no less a warning to us, than their many excellencies are a bright example. And so we find it in the later periods of the Jewish history, and in the time of our Lord. How justly John the Baptist upbraids the people for their sins! and what wickedness the Jews exhibited in their treatment of Christ! In every land of which history or tradition informs us, sin has prevailed. We might have expected that when the religion of Christ, with its holy lessons, its solemn warnings, and its glorious hopes, was introduced, sin would disappear; but no—those who through successive generations have professed the Christian faith, have committed every form of sin that we could conceive.

But we should not fall into the common error of supposing that every thought and act of every human being is sinful. The same records that illustrate the wickedness of the human race, clearly disprove such a supposition. If Cain was wicked, Abel was righteous. Though Noah sinned, his general life was approved by God. In the

patriarchal times we read of many being righteous. Moses was approved of God, and so were many in his time and afterwards. If David, in the extreme penitence of his soul, exclaimed—"I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me;" let us not forget the many pure sentiments and noble and generous deeds by which he was distinguished. If Jeremiah once said—"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked," he was exhorting the people not to put their trust in men, but in God; and in the same passage he pronounces a blessing on those who trust in the Lord, and he compares them to a tree planted by rivers of water. And we should remember how Christ commends some for their good qualities, as Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, while Paul speaks of those "who having not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law." And this light which, in the Scripture, falls upon the record otherwise so dark, of human character, is amply confirmed by the experience of life. Amid the gloom which in our own country and others, tyranny and pride, selfishness and lust, falsehood and fraud have thrown over the moral world, may we not dwell with thankfulness on the records of freedom and patriotism, of generosity and self-sacrifice, of the purest love of God, and the most devoted love of humanity that have animated many a heart, and ennobled many a life. Go to the darkest scenes of depravity, and there you will find some promptings of generous affection that vindicate our heavenly origin, and amidst so many shortcomings and transgressions, prove that we are not all sinful, and that even the greatest sinner is not without some spark of good, which guarded, and cherished, might yet grow into a holy flame.

But, it may be asked, What of Original Sin? We reply, that term is the invention of theologians, and is not only unscriptural, but is entirely opposed to the teachings of Scripture and the dictates of common sense. Sin, from its very nature, must be actual; it is "the transgression of the law." It may be farther asked, Was not our nature changed by the sin of Adam, and is not this the cause of our sinning? We reply, No; for Adam sinned before his nature could have been thus changed,

and we sin, not *because* Adam sinned, but *as* he sinned. Does not Scripture teach, it may be asked again, that because of Adam's sin we have a corrupted nature, and are, at birth, "bound over to the wrath of God and the curse of the law, and made subject to death, with all miseries, spiritual, temporal, and eternal?" Our reply is, No; the nature we have, with its powers and capacities, its emotions and passions, God gave us. He, and not Adam or the Devil, is the Father of our spirits and the former of our bodies. A common opinion is, that all men, through Adam's sin, are subject to God's wrath, but a few only, through Christ's mediation, are rescued from hell, and fitted for glory. If that be true, the mischief done by Adam was greater than the benefits bestowed by Christ, whereas, the Apostle teaches the very opposite, for he says, that "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." We are not wicked at birth, we are not righteous; we have tendencies to sin, but we have neither yielded to evil nor resisted it. We are innocent. Thus Christ evidently regarded infants when he blessed them, and said, "of such is the kingdom of God." So far from our being by nature all corrupted—and—in short devils incarnate—we have naturally a sense of justice, and truth, and righteousness. To this natural sense Christ appeals, when he says to the Jews, "Why will ye not yourselves judge what is right?" Yet, in some Confessions of Faith, this doctrine of original sin is strongly set forth, and in the Westminster Confession it says, that "elect infants are saved by Christ; so also are all other elect persons who cannot be called by the word; but others not elected cannot be saved." And thus is plainly implied the horrible dogma, that many infants dying in infancy are plunged into endless torment. The plain teaching of Scripture is, that "God made men upright, but they have sought out many inventions." "Every man must bear his own burden." "The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son." We shall no more be punished for Adam's sin than he for ours. If the doctrine of original sin and innate depravity were true and important, why should our Saviour be silent respect-

ing it? He never alludes to it; and we may be sure that every important doctrine of revelation, whether it refer to God, or Christ, or man—to time or eternity—is clearly set forth in the Gospels. Sin is the great evil that prevails in the world. For the grand object of awakening men to righteousness, and redeeming them from iniquity, God sent his well-beloved Son. There is no irresistible decree binding any of us to the bondage of sin—no eternal purpose securing for any of us the blessedness of heaven—“Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap.” Man, in this life, is neither an angel, all perfection, nor yet a devil, all wickedness; but a free agent, surrounded by many temptations, liable to sin, yet capable of holiness, and blessed in these lands with the most precious promises and the most ennobling hopes, to urge him heavenward, and lead him, “by a patient continuance in well-doing, to seek for glory, honour, and immortality.”

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

THE collection of ancient records, which we call the Bible, was not made hastily, nor accepted during the last eighteen centuries without much and serious examination of its claims. The Holy Scriptures have not assumed their elevated place as if by divine right, but, on the contrary, have submitted to the ordinary tests applied by the human mind to ancient writings in general, and are thus approved as “worthy of all acceptance.” Indeed, no other collection has been exposed to any ordeal so repeated and severe. Criticisms mild, and criticisms merciless, have assailed them in every age, and their fate in this respect has had no parallel in the history of literature. Their facts have been disputed, their chronology cavilled at, their references to contemporary history criticised, the honesty of their writers questioned, their revelations of grace and truth subjected to a scrutiny of the most trying, and often intensely prejudiced character. Yet they have come down the stream of time from such far distant points, not only uninjured, but if possible with increased

value, just as every succeeding age is more fitted to appreciate their miraculous adaptation to human hearts. Their lessons of love, reproof, consolation, instruction in righteousness have lost nothing of their original truth or strength. Neither is their object in any respect changed. Their aim now, as ever, is to make man "wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus," and their efficacy, as a great means of grace and consolation, cannot be over-estimated. The lessons of Scripture have been more generally learned and more deeply pondered than superficial observers might be willing to suppose. These holy lessons, learned in youth amid home associations, are never forgotten, even although an "evil heart of unbelief" may afterwards lead away the pilgrim's steps into he knows not what dreary labyrinths of uncertainty and doubt. And although the influence of custom would seem to have moulded all men into the same outward manner, the stern vicissitudes of life are ever interposing, and for each and all, our holy Bibles never fail to provide some medicine and food. But for this, how should we brook from day to day the yearnings of affection, of sickness, the decay of strength, the fear of the end? A little way before us all lies that extreme point on life's pilgrimage which, when we approach, we must either rest on the heavenly hopes inspired by the Bible, or pass away into the land of shadows without any hope. In the meantime, this blessed Book asks us all individually, even including those who are young and in perfect health, to think *what it must be to die*. And to prepare us for that time of fear and woe, when the embracing hands of affection must be unclasped, the Bible teaches us what shall make life at present real and true, solemnly urging the wisdom of that preparation which shall abide with us when the pageant of the present world is closing, and its lights going out. The Bible, and only the Bible, whispers to us in soothing but most decided accents that our Redeemer liveth, that he who is "the resurrection and the life" has passed through the shadows before us, and will never forsake us.

These remarks apply equally to the Old Testament and the New, for both are precious, each in its own time and

place, and we cannot, as Christians, consent to their separation. Some religionists erroneously imagine that they may safely relinquish faith in the divine origin and authority of the Old Testament; but in this important question, as in all others of a similar character, we must submit to the decision of Christ. Questions which Jesus and his Apostles leave *open* may be discussed as such; but when they teach any great truth distinctly, we have no course but to accept it with humility and trust. Now he teaches us to reverence and accept the Scriptures of the Old Testament as the very highest earthly standard of appeal. After his resurrection he took an early and solemn occasion to explain to his Apostles the wondrous prophecies recorded in the Jewish Scriptures, of his coming into the world, his mission, death, and resurrection from the grave. "*Beginning at Moses, and all the Prophets, he expounded unto them, in all the Scriptures, the things concerning himself.*" The forty days that intervened between his resurrection and ascension into heaven appear to have been mainly devoted by the Saviour to the discussion and explanation of these wondrous themes, thus revealing more fully the precise nature and objects of his mission. "*These,*" said he, "are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms concerning me." And it was on this same very solemn occasion, we are told, that "he opened their understanding that they might *understand the Scriptures.*"

There is no dispute as to *what* were those Scriptures which the Saviour has thus consecrated through all time by his approval and authority. Long previously to his coming into the world, the Jews had collected their sacred records into one volume, to which the Epistle to the Hebrews expressly refers, chap. x. 7, "In the volume of the Book it is written of me." This volume or collection was universally acknowledged as containing the oracles of God, and hence it was known pre-eminently as *the Scriptures*. It was translated into the Greek language many centuries before the birth of Christ. This Greek version has been preserved to our day; it

constitutes our Old Testament, and from it Christ and his Apostles have quoted the several portions which appear in the books of the New Testament. Hence we infer that our Lord and his Apostles acknowledged the authenticity of this version, and quoted from it as being a faithful translation of the Jewish Scriptures. Now, what *they* have thus done, *we* may well and safely venture to do. *Such* testimony as to the truth and importance of the Old Testament records no Christian will attempt to undervalue or impeach. On the contrary, we must see that we have here evidence of the most assuring and satisfactory character. We, who look unto Jesus as being in himself pre-eminently "*the Truth*," require no farther or higher testimony to the Old Testament Scriptures than the appeal which he thus, on momentous occasions, makes to their authority. But his Apostles invariably do the same, and if we believe that they were specially set apart and enlightened for the great work of their mission, we can never consent to abandon those holy records from which they drew so much of their inspiration—so many noble sentiments of patience, humility, and hope.

We thus see how closely, how inseparably, the contents of the Old and New Testament are united. The writers of the latter appeal continually to the Jewish Scriptures for confirmation of the truths they teach. If the tones of the two covenants were dissonant, or if the Mosaic system contained no intimation of the great distinguishing truths of the Gospel, such as the wondrous birth, mission, death, and resurrection of the Son of God, then the evidences of Christianity would be fatally defective, for the Apostles most certainly rest on this proof from the Old Testament, and find in Moses, and the Prophets, and the Psalms, things concerning the Messiah. Nor can they be deceived, for with ever-increasing clearness the Old Testament affirms, from the beginning, the coming of the great Agent in human redemption. It further assigns to him titles which no mere king, or priest, or prophet could claim, and acts which "no mere man" could perform. It describes him as undergoing a depth of suffering and enjoying a height of triumph which could not

meet in the person of any merely human being or leader, but yet are fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth. Thus, the Old Testament clearly embodies the same ideas as the New, and in this respect is a most indispensable evidence to its truth. "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things."

The question respecting what is termed the *inspiration* of the several books comprised in the Old and New Testament, has called forth a very large amount of irreverent criticism. The sacred writers, unquestionably, received whatever kind or degree of divine assistance was necessary to accomplish their several tasks; but only in certain great and rare cases was this influence or assistance required to be of a supernatural character. The *historical* portions of the Bible did not require that their authors, when writing them, should enjoy any direct or special illumination from heaven, farther than is implied in a competent knowledge of the events to be recorded, and integrity in relating them faithfully. Such knowledge can be obtained by the historian, either from his witnessing the events he records, or from the testimony of other credible and faithful witnesses, or from genuine records of the times in which the events occurred. Thus the writers of the history of the Patriarchs, of the coming forth of the Israelites from Egypt, their wanderings in the Wilderness, and final settlement in the land of Canaan; the authors of the Books of Judges, Ruth, Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, required no supernatural inspiration to instruct them in a knowledge of the several circumstances and events which they relate. The four Evangelists who wrote the short account contained in the Gospels of the life of Christ, were themselves *eye-witnesses* of the things they so faithfully record. One of them has said—"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the Word of life. That which we have *seen* and *heard* declare we unto you." They were thus "*eye-witnesses* and ministers of the Word,"

and, as such, were competent to write the historical portions of the Gospels and Acts of the Apostles without the intervention of supernatural aid.

But it must be different with respect to the *prophetical* parts of Scripture, as well as in reference to certain *awful* and *mysterious truths* which may be said to lie far away beyond the reach of the mightiest human intellect. Such prophecies and truths are the immediate results of divine illumination, and could only have been originally made known by supernatural interposition. Prediction is an absolute impossibility to the unaided powers of man; and, as future events can only be known to God, so from him directly must proceed the knowledge which enabled men to foretel them. Every prophecy, then, in connexion with the Old and New Covenant,—every revelation respecting their origin, nature, progress, and final consummation which human eye hath “not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive”—such prophecies and revelations are, and only can be, the immediate results of divine agency on the minds of those by whom they were originally uttered. The wondrous truths thus revealed constitute what the Apostle has well termed, “the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory,”—“the mystery which had been hid from ages and from generations,”—the mystery which from the beginning of “the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ.” In this sense the Apostle also declares that “no man can say that Jesus is the Lord *but by the Holy Ghost*.” We who believe it now may say it, but the great and astounding truths embodied in this brief and apparently simple announcement could only have been communicated by direct supernatural agency to him by whom it was originally uttered. The unaided human mind never could have ascended to the height of this great argument,—never could have conceived, much less unfolded or explained, those wondrous counsels of grace and mercy into which the angels desire to look. Therefore, all our knowledge of them must have been originally communicated through some supernatural revelations from the fountain of all light and truth. Such can only be

the meaning of Paul, when he says, "*by revelation God made known unto me the mystery, which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.*"

We may well be satisfied, therefore, with the *sufficiency* of Scripture to accomplish the infinitely high and holy purposes for which it has been given. Let us beware of handling this sacred volume *deceitfully*, either by permitting other standards to supplant its authority, or, what is still worse, by denying that authority altogether. Those who set up human creeds in the Christian Church are certainly not chargeable with the crime of deliberate robbery against the Word of God, although they may thus be said, in some measure, practically to ignore its *sufficiency* as a guide on the earth—as a light from heaven to shine upon our path and illumine our hearts. Their conduct, however, may be charitably regarded as compatible with a certain amount of faith in, and veneration for, the Holy Scriptures. But how, on the other hand, are we to contemplate the movements of those who labour to make the Word of God of none effect, not by traditions which obscure, but by insinuations which traduce; not by that unwise love which prompts thoughtless people to imagine that they can sustain or supplement the Bible by their own preposterous inventions, but by that merciless criticism, which those who wield it would be slow to apply to Tacitus or Thucydides. These critics will never be able to understand that the harmony of the Bible is made up of many different tones, or that its revelations, although so varied, all refer to or unfold the great fact of human redemption by Jesus Christ. They aver that they believe in this fact, but deny that it involves any supernatural agency in its origin or accomplishment. Rather than admit this, they will seek rest in other systems, but will find none, for they cannot ignore those urgent and ever-present wants of the human heart, which the Bible only can meet and set at rest. These wants are not to be satisfied with mere speculations however ingenious, nor with a learned talk about objectivity and subjectivity, nor even with continual hankering (however dignified, or judiciously indulged), after new

theories of supernatural interpretation. No, we must accept the Bible, instead of rejecting it, if we would experience its consolations; we must follow Christ, instead of forsaking him, if we would find that genuine "rest" which he has promised to all who look unto *him* and learn of *him*.

MARY MAGDALENE.

BLESSED, yet sinful one, and broken-hearted !
The crowd are pointing at the thing forlorn,
In wonder and in scorn !
Thou weapest days of innocence departed ;
Thou weapest, and thy tears have power to move
The Lord to pity and to love.

The greatest of thy follies is forgiven,
Even for the least of all the tears that shine
On that pale cheek of thine.
Thou didst kneel down to him who came from heaven,
Evil and ignorant ; and thou shalt rise
Holy and pure and wise.

It is not much that to the fragrant blossom
The ragged brier should change ; the bitter fir
Distil Arabian myrrh ;
Nor that, upon the wintry desert's bosom,
The harvest should rise plenteous, and the swain
Bear home abundant grain.

But come and see the bleak and barren mountains,
Thick to their tops with roses ; come and see
Leaves on the dry, dead tree.
The perished plant, set out by living fountains,
Grows fruitful, and its beauteous branches rise
Forever toward "the skies."

W. C. BRYANT.

THE PRINCIPLES AND PROGRESS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY,

BEING AN OUTLINE OF THE INAUGURAL DISCOURSE PREACHED BY THE MODERATOR, THE REV. WILLIAM BRUCE, AT THE FIRST MEETING OF THE NORTHERN PRESBYTERY OF ANTRIM.

TAKING for his text Gal. v. 1—"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage"—which he considered the standard text for the subject of Religious Liberty,—he premised some observations on the passage itself, and then proceeded to say, that one great object of Paul's preaching was to prevent the disciples from being in any way burdened with Jewish observances, and that he was successful in attaining this end; that afterwards, however, Christians were entangled in grievous yokes of bondage, especially under the ascendancy of the Roman Catholic Church; till the evil became so enormous, the tyranny so monstrous, and the absurdities so flagrant, as to provoke resistance and secure the success of the Reformation, as soon as there arose one of the boldness and energy of spirit that Luther had, to withstand the domination of the Roman See.

He remarked, that the English Reformation was productive of less liberty than the Continental, and that the retaining of so many resemblances to the usages of the Roman Catholic Church gave rise to that remarkable body, the Puritans or Non-Conformists; who, returning from their refuge abroad, brought back with them a strong inclination for the more Scriptural and purer forms of the Genevan Church.

He did not enter into any account of the persecuting modes adopted in England to enforce compliance with these offensive observances; but he could not pass over, in total silence, that memorable transaction—the expulsion of about 2,000 ministers from their livings in the Established Church—from non-compliance with the Act of Uniformity in 1662. For our attention is more emphatically turned to this in the present year, because all Non-Conformist England is actively engaged, in its different sections, in devising the most conspicuous and impres-

sive mode of commemorating the bi-centenary anniversary of that event on the ensuing 24th of August; being that ominous day of St. Bartholomew, previously noted for the massacre of the Huguenots not one hundred years before, and which happens, in this year, to be on the same day of the week on which the expulsion took place.

About fifteen years before this event, the Westminster Confession of Faith was composed, which has gone further to supersede the authority of Scripture in the formation of religious opinions, over a large extent of population in different parts of the world, than any other human authority that we know; and, within thirty years after the same event, among the good fruits of the Revolution, there was passed that very imperfect measure called the Toleration Act. Imperfect as it was, it was the dawn of spiritual light; but it was long, and by fitful efforts, before it broke forth into open day. The first accession of light and liberty broke forth in the Salters' Hall debates in London, in 1719, when the London ministers solemnly determined that they would not protect Trinitarian doctrines by requiring their recognition from persons engaged in the ministry. Further they could not go without breach of law. By the prevalence of public opinion, the restrictive clauses of the Toleration Act gradually fell into disuse, and, in 1779, an act was passed abolishing subscription to the doctrinal articles of the Church of England, and substituting a declaration of being a "Christian and a Protestant, and believing that the Scriptures, as commonly believed among Protestant Churches, contain the revealed will of God, and receiving the same as the rule of his doctrine and practice."

In 1813 a further advance was made, by an act removing all restraints on the expression of opinions adverse to the doctrine of the Trinity. Then followed, in 1844, the never-to-be-forgotten measure of justice in the Dissenters' Chapel Act. And later still, in 1855, a Bill was introduced by Lord Brougham, in a very liberal speech, which was separately published. These enactments were principally designed to secure religious liberty in the exercise of civil rights; but, though showing great progress in

the National mind, were defective as requiring any religious profession for the enjoyment of civil privileges.

With the Salters' Hall Debates was connected that struggle among ourselves that terminated in the expulsion of the Antrim Presbytery from the General Synod of Ulster, on the ground of refusing subscription to the Westminster Confession of Faith on the ordination of ministers, or as a term of ministerial communion; and adopting substantially the same declaration that was afterwards inserted in the Act of 1779. These discussions, in what goes by the name of the "Seven Synods," originated in the Belfast Society, but were much promoted by the debates in London, especially on the arrival of Mr. Haliday in Belfast, who had been present there.

Nearly contemporary with these commotions in England and Ireland, was the successful attempt of John Alphonso Turretin in Geneva, in 1725, to abolish subscription to the Helvetic Confession of Faith as obligatory upon candidates for ordination. Other Churches, too, on the Continent adopted the same principle, and this practice has prevailed in the Protestant Churches in France, Switzerland, &c.

In the Church of England a similar movement was manifested by the publication of "Free and Candid Disquisitions," by the Rev. John Jones,* and more remarkably still by the "Confessional" and other publications of Archdeacon Blackburne, occasioned by his scruples about signing the Thirty-Nine Articles. He was sup-

* "Free and Candid Disquisitions relating to the Church of England, 1749." This work was a compilation of authorities taken from the writings of some eminent divines of the Church of England, tending to shew the necessity, or at least the expediency, of revising the Liturgy. It was compiled by the Rev. John Jones, Vicar of Alconbury, in Huntingdonshire, a man of very singular character, pious and regular in his deportment, diligent in his clerical functions, and indefatigable in his studies, which were chiefly employed in promoting this scheme of reformation. For further particulars concerning this book and the "Confessional, or a Full and Free Enquiry into the Right, Utility, Edification, and Success of establishing Systematical Confessions of Faith and Doctrine in Protestant Churches," published anonymously in 1766, but known to have been written by Archdeacon Blackburne,—See *Nichols's Literary Anecdotes of the 18th century*, vol. iii. p. 15, Note, where will be found many interesting particulars concerning Blackburne, Bishop Law, &c., &c.

ported by Dr. Edmund Law, afterwards Bishop of Carlisle, who also encouraged the meeting at the Feathers Tavern,* from which emanated an unsuccessful petition to the Legislature, in 1772, maintaining that, as the Word of God was owned to be an adequate rule,—amply sufficient for eternal salvation and our only safe guide to it,—we should surely be content with this rule, and leave every doctrine in exactly the same precision in which it is there originally delivered.

In these and other cases, in which the object was to relieve the teachers of religion from Articles, Creeds, and Confessions as their guide in teaching, and to insist upon the principles of non-subscription, there does not appear to have ever existed the slightest scruple against openly avowing their belief in the Divine mission and authority of Christ, or in the Scriptures as containing the only authentic record of the Divine revelation as taught by Jesus Christ and the holy Apostles speaking by his authority. The question was about substituting a human interpretation of this record instead of the record itself,—deciding, without any warrant from Scripture, that the Godhead consists of three persons, same in substance, equal in power and glory, forming one true eternal God,—that one of these three co-equal persons sent another to suffer and die for the satisfaction of his justice, and both these sent the third to be employed in the sanctification of believers—whether Christ consisted of one nature or two—whether he spake at one time as man and another

* This petition emanated, in 1771, from an Association called from the place of meeting, "The Feathers Tavern Association." It was formed on the suggestion of Archdeacon Blackburne, in "Proposals for an Application to Parliament for Relief in the Matter of Subscription, &c., humbly submitted to the consideration of the Learned and Conscientious Clergy." The petition was drawn up by the Archdeacon, adopted by the Association, and circulated through the country with great industry, in order to obtain signatures previous to the meeting of Parliament. In this labour Theophilus Lindsay took a conspicuous part. The petition, with 250 signatures, was presented in February, 1772, "and gave rise to one of the most interesting and animated debates that was ever heard in that house,"—"a debate," says Mr. Lindsay, "which entered gloriously into the whole merits of our cause, and which was well worth going 240 miles to hear." It lasted for eight hours. The petition was rejected, however, by 217 to 71.

as God, with a variety of other questions concerning atonement, justification, &c.

On such matters, they maintained, and we maintain, that no human tribunal, whether an assembly sitting 200 years ago, or any other, has a right to dictate which view a man *must* take, to have any hope of salvation—nor any one generation to bind another to its own views—but that Christ and his Apostles had this right, and that what they declared (and as far as they declared it) is binding upon all.

Every one is at liberty to dispute this, to reject this, but, in so doing, he renounces the office of being a teacher of Christ's Gospel, and it is only by gross deception that he can allow himself to be so considered; for it does not follow, from these principles, that a person entering into the Christian ministry is under no obligation whatever. He is not at liberty to be a Deist, a Jew, a Mahometan. As long as he is an isolated individual, he can use his liberty as he pleases; but when he undertakes the office of a minister of the Gospel, under Christ's authority, he is bound by whatever that authority requires; and the liberty wherewith Christ has made him free, he is to use, not for concealment, but for manifestation of the truth. And it is a strange abuse of the true and important principle of non-subscription to creeds, to make it a pretence for refusing to avow his submission to Christ's authority, his belief in Christ's veracity, his reception of the authentic record of Christ's teachings as containing the revelation of God's will through him.

When several congregations are united together, under Presbyterian order, for their mutual edification and the management of their affairs, the Presbytery has certain trusts reposed in it, and certain functions to discharge, and in these functions and trusts the Elders of the congregations have co-ordinate powers with the ministers. One of its most important functions is to ordain or instal pastors over vacant congregations; and it is here that the deceptive, and what I may call degenerate, views of the principle of non-subscription are attended with the greatest danger. For it is maintained by some, as the legitimate consequence of this principle, that the ratifica-

tion of this important relation between a pastor and his congregation should be completed in total ignorance on the part of the Presbytery as to the character and qualifications of the minister, and as total concealment on his part of the views and principles on which he undertakes the charge.

Nothing was further from the thoughts of the original Non-Subscribers. It was not for concealment (which is bondage, true mental slavery, not liberty.) but it was for the unrestricted freedom of open testimony to the truth that they contended. While the Presbytery disavow any right to control the free judgment of the minister in his ministrations, they may certainly refuse to give their sanction to the appointment of one who refuses to acknowledge the authority of Christ and the truth of his revelation; or to admitting as one of their body, a person who scruples to acknowledge that authority which is the bond of their union, and virtually claims the liberty to abjure or ignore the Christian religion.

To require, on such an occasion, a solemn recognition of the truth of that Gospel which he undertakes to preach—of that authority under which he administers the ordinances of religion, conveys no imputation on the sincerity of the person—implies no authority in the Presbytery to control his opinions or his teachings. It is an open avowal of essential principles on which alone he can stand in that position. It is bearing an appropriate testimony to his submission to that Master whom he is bound to serve—a testimony that no false pride should make him refuse to bear—a testimony that he should glory in bearing on all occasions, and that he can hardly ever bear more seasonably than to the flock of whom he takes the oversight. It is such an avowal as becomes one who is intent on teaching his flock the whole counsel of God in their salvation—such an avowal as becomes the solemnity of the occasion and the importance of the trust—such as will enable his brethren, the ministers of the Presbytery, to give him most cordially the right hand of fellowship, and admit him as their co-presbyter and fellow-labourer in the vineyard of the Lord. To these soberminded views *our* communities have always faithfully responded, and, in our opinion, they should never be abandoned.

HINTS ON CONGREGATIONAL PSALMODY.

MUCH has been said and written about Congregational Psalmody, and the desirableness of inducing the people generally to join in singing; but as yet very little progress has been made towards such an end. Many suggestions have been offered, and, to some extent at least, have been carried out with good effect. Still we Unitarians are very far behind our neighbours of other denominations in this respect. The great aim with many among us seems to be to have the singing in the choir as good as possible, and some would go so far as to prevent the people from trying to join, lest they should spoil the music. It is, no doubt, very trying to an educated ear to hear a man endeavouring to aid the choir by grunting a sort of bass accompaniment, consisting of two or at most three notes, or a woman singing something like half a note higher than the leading voices. Even these discordant elements, however, if the singing were general, would hardly be noticed. It is very seldom in our churches we can have a large paid choir, and, in many respects, it is not desirable that we should. Then amateur choirs are proverbially uncertain, and so the number of singers sometimes comes to be very small. Under these circumstances it is much to be wished that a large proportion of the congregation should join in the singing. The plan which many of the Methodists, who are famous for good music in their churches, have adopted is this—they employ a good teacher, who, besides instructing the choir, devotes an hour or two in the week to the congregation. He meets all those who can attend, and sings over with them the tunes for the following Sunday. By this means any who can sing at all are enabled to join without difficulty. They have not the excuse which many people plead of not knowing the tunes, and their going over them with others gives them confidence.

Another plan which has been pursued with some success, is to have the children in the Sunday School taught, and to place two or three of them in different parts of the meeting-house. Where this is practicable

it may have a very good effect ; but there are few schools from which a number of sufficiently advanced and sufficiently steady pupils could be selected to carry out this plan with success. It has been often remarked in Sunday Schools that the girls do all the singing, the boys seldom open their mouths. This may partly be because most boys seem to regard singing as a girlish accomplishment with which they have nothing to do. This idea is strengthened when, as is often the case in our Schools, the teaching of the singing depends upon the ladies. But in the schools, as in the church, a good deal may be done by previously practising with the children the tunes they are about to sing. It has sometimes been found a good plan to have a very large choir composed of members of the congregation ; but the larger the choir, the more difficult it is to keep them in time, and tune, and temper.

As to the selection of tunes, difficult ones ought to be avoided. There are very many beautiful tunes which are simple enough. Those in most common use are not always the easiest. Good congregational tunes, such as "Martyrdom" and the "Old Hundredth," in many churches are less frequently used, from the difficulty of singing them in the slow time in which many choirs sing them. A number singing the air, though very good when nothing better can be had, has not, of course, so good an effect as where the different parts can be taken. One great obstacle to singing in parts is that in this country we have so many different books, with the tunes differently harmonized in each. In many parts of the Continent judges are appointed by Government to decide on the best arrangement of tunes, and these are adopted in every church ; so that a stranger going in is sure of being in harmony with the choir, if he sing the bass or tenor he has been accustomed to in another church. Here the case would be widely different ; but this is a free country, and every congregation has a right to its own opinion, even as to the harmonizing of a tune.

A. B.

JOSEPH TUCKERMAN AND THE MINISTRY AT LARGE.

THE name of Joseph Tuckerman is intimately associated with those Christian efforts which, in many towns, have for years been made to help the neglected poor, and bring into their homes the comforting and sanctifying influences of the Gospel. After a ministry of more than five and twenty years as pastor of the Congregationalist Church in Chelsea, he was compelled, from delicacy of health, to resign his charge. But although unable to undergo the fatigues of a country parish, he was still anxious to labour in his Master's work, and he resolved to carry out a scheme which for years he had contemplated, and become a pastor to the neglected poor in his native city of Boston, U. S.,—a shepherd to those who, under the very shadow of churches and chapels, had no one to dispense to them the bread of life,—in short, to be a Minister at Large. It was a noble and heavenly thought that thus possessed the mind of a good man, awakened and strengthened by his sympathy with the indigent in his former parish, and his experience of the power of humane and Christian efforts to elevate the very lowest. In order to trace the exertions of this true philanthropist, and exhibit some of the results which crowned his labours, we shall quote from his own narrative:

“It was on the 5th of November, 1826, that I began this ministry. With the aid of two friends, within the first quarter of a year I became acquainted with fifty families as their minister. The way was now plain before me. At the end of the second quarter I had more than ninety families in my charge. At the end of the first year I was connected in this service with nearly a hundred and seventy families; and I had made within the year more than nineteen hundred visits. At the expiration of another six months, I was the pastor of two hundred and fifty families. Nor was there a byway, nor hardly a yard which I had explored thoroughly. I had now learned, also, that there were many, very many besides the poor, who had no connexion with any religious society, and who never looked for the visit of a minister, except on an occasion of severe illness, or of a funeral in the family.”

In this interesting but most difficult work Dr. Tuckerman was sustained by a deep sense of the worth of humanity, and the capacity for improvement which remains

even in the most abandoned. "I do not believe," he says, "that there ever was, or that there is, the human being in whom there is no element of goodness—no element of moral recoverableness—no unextinguished spark of moral sensibility, which, with God's blessing, may not be blown into a flame. There is no one so corrupted that there are no moral remains in him. This principle is, indeed, more or less acted upon by every sect of Christians, however inconsistent it may be with their articles of faith, or their theories of Christianity." Filled with this strong faith, which repeated disappointments might with many have overturned, this Christian hero pursued his work for years, and gathered round him fellow-labourers who caught his spirit and helped on his work; so that now, in many cities of America and of England, this Ministry at Large is an important institution, which owes not perhaps its origin, but its fullest development to the piety, benevolence, and zeal of a Christian Unitarian. Dr. Tuckerman describes, in a work which he published some years before his death, and from which we have already made an extract, his modes of operation and some of the results of his labours. His first business was to relieve the pressing wants of the poor, and improve their physical condition; but this, though in itself important, he regarded only as a secondary object, and as a means of communicating to them the precepts, hopes, and consolations of religion, by which their outward circumstances might be permanently improved, and they might be quickened into a spiritual life. Often through the children of a family he obtained access to the parents; and he felt that even if he failed thus to improve and benefit the elder members, he had accomplished much if he succeeded in bringing the children under the influence of education. Those children, he thought with himself, will soon be men and women. What will be their character then? And this consideration stimulated him with increased ardour in his efforts to help them. We subjoin a passage or two, detailing scenes which exhibit the character of his exertions, and some of their happiest fruits.

"One morning I entered a room that I might make some inquiry respecting a family. Every thing in this room was in confusion.

The floor, the furniture, and the dress of the woman whom I saw there were alike filthy; and a man was lying upon the bed in the deep sleep of thorough intoxication. I had never before been in that room. But it was a matter of course that I should at once learn what I could of this family. And I soon learned from the wife that her husband was a journeyman mechanic, and abundantly able to provide for his family, if he would but give up the use of strong drink. It was my practice on Sunday to visit certain families, in which the husband and father was seldom found to be at home on other days, except at meal-times. I therefore told this woman that I would see her again on Sunday, when I hoped to be able to speak to her husband. She expressed her wish that I would, and I left her. At nine o'clock on the following Sunday morning I was there again. I knocked at the door, and entered. The man whom I had seen upon the bed on the preceding Friday now stood before me. I said to his wife, 'You have mentioned my intention to call here this morning.' 'No, sir,' she replied. Her husband was obviously much surprised at seeing me enter his room; I therefore immediately offered him my hand, which he accepted; and I said to him, 'I was here on Friday morning, and saw you upon the bed; and have taken the liberty to call upon you.' We were all soon seated. I did not say to this man, 'I saw you *drunk* upon your bed.' He well knew what was the condition in which I had seen him. At once, however, we entered upon the subject upon which I wished to communicate with him. I addressed him with the respect due to a man, and the interest due to a brother. He was touched,—affected,—and within half an hour threw open his whole heart to me. He assured me that he would not taste any intoxicating drink till he should see me on the next Sunday. At that time I was with him again, and had the testimony of his wife that he had been faithful to his promise. I passed another half hour with him. We were already friends. Again he engaged to go through the week without tasting any thing which could produce intoxication. Again and again, and again he renewed his pledge to me, and was faithful to it. After six or eight weeks I found him on Sunday morning in a new suit of clothes,—the fruits of his own earnings. Soon a new cooking stove was provided. The dress of his wife also was clean and comfortable. And never shall I forget the bright and happy expression with which she one morning said to me, 'I have now been married twenty years; and in all those years I have not been so happy as I have been during the last three months.' Had I treated this man otherwise than with respect, and sympathy, how would he have received me, and how would he have treated my endeavours to reclaim him from intemperance?

"Again. Here is a mother; and here are three, four, or five children. Here is a boy of ten, or twelve years of age, who cannot read. He once perhaps went to school, but became wearied of the restraints of school, and left it. He has been four or five years a vagrant. A brother, who is a year or two older than himself, is, and for years has been, also a vagrant, and quite as much further advanced in moral evil as he is in age. And a sister, it may be still

a year older, has had no better associates either of her own sex, or of ours, than her brothers, and the companions of her brothers. Observe their matted or straggling hair ; their worn, and torn, and filthy clothes ; their hands and face as filthy ; their wild shyness—do you understand this expression ?—or it may be their bold and unflinching gaze. The smaller children are lawless, or rather wild, for they have been wholly untrained. But there is as yet no stamp of vice upon their countenances.” * * * *

“The question arises, to what end shall our first efforts be most strongly directed ? And the answer will differ with the different circumstances of the case. At all events, we will speak of the use of ardent spirits ; and do all we can to give the strongest impression of the evils, both to the body and the soul, and to the condition both here and hereafter, which are experienced, or may be reasonably feared, from the use of them. We will talk with, and of the children ; and propose plans to, and concerning them, for their greatest well-being. We will talk also of cleanliness, and of other means entirely within the reach of these parents, by which the room they occupy may be made far more comfortable ; of measures to be taken in order to obtain employment ; of the wisest expenditure of earnings ; of what is suffered from waste, and may be avoided by judicious forethought, and by economy. Nor will we stop here. We will talk often of the happiness of strong domestic affections, and of the misery induced by ungoverned tempers ; of conjugal, parental, and filial duties, interests, capabilities, joys, sorrows ; of the soul and its relation to God ; of immortality and accountableness ; of Jesus Christ, and of the objects for which he lived, taught, suffered, and died. Yet not at once, or in one visit will we attempt all this. Far otherwise. All these objects are constantly to be kept in view, and all these are subjects of discourse. But we must dispense to each individual as he shall be able to receive ; and we are to regard times and circumstances with reference to the question of ability to receive. Our solicitude must be for the disease, rather than the symptoms ; and yet something, and even much, may have been done when we shall have subdued, or even greatly alleviated a symptom.

Our intelligence department this month contains a report of the annual meeting of an institution based on the principles and carried out on the plan developed by Dr. Tuckerman, and supported by the liberality of the Unitarians of Belfast. It is gratifying to see the Christian efforts of the different congregations directed to so important an object, and we venture to hope that what has been done is only an earnest of more extended efforts, and that we may in time have not one but several earnest ministers engaged in this work, encouraged by the zealous co-operation of many, and supported by the cheerful contributions of all.

A WORD TO THE "UNITARIAN HERALD."

The Unitarian Herald, which may be regarded as the organ of the Unitarian Churches in the North of England, takes exception, in a recent number, to the views of Non-Subscription which have been expressed and advocated in the pages of *The Christian Unitarian*, alleging that we limit it to the rejection of "orthodox creeds," and the acceptance of a "Christian creed." If, for "orthodox," we read "human," the allegation is quite correct. We contend, and the history of our churches clearly proves, that Non-Subscription signifies the acceptance of the Scriptures as an infallible rule of faith, and the rejection of human authority in their interpretation. *The Herald* goes farther than we do, and employs the term, not merely to signify the rejection of human authority in religion, but also to denote the liberty of receiving or not receiving the Scriptures as the record of God's revelation, and Christ as our Lord and Master, from whose teachings there is no appeal. If these be the views inculcated by the editors of *The Herald*, they will certainly help on the fulfilment of the famous prediction recently made by a North of England minister, that "Theodore Parker's interpretation of Christianity bids fair to become, in the main, the dominant thought in the Unitarian Church."

A correspondent, whose opinion, if we gave the name, would carry much weight, not only here, but in England, thus refers to a portion of *The Herald's* article :—"We have seldom read a more absurd sentiment than the following in *The Unitarian Herald* of April 5, p. 115. 'Let us not be misunderstood, the words embody our own creed; but, were we required to declare by any human authority, especially were we required to declare it as a condition of church fellowship, we would suffer any and everything rather than comply.' Now, 'church fellowship' must mean participation in some principles, sentiments, mode of worship, and so forth, common to both parties in this fellowship. It implies some bond of union. How can this be known if it is not declared? How could they be

admitted into fellowship with any society, church or other, without being required to declare some community of principle? But this declaration they would heroically suffer any and everything rather than comply with, or require others to comply with. Of course they would admit into church fellowship, Secularists, Pantheists, Atheists, without hesitation, scruple, or inquiry, notwithstanding what common repute might say; because, to inquire at all, would be a violation of the sacred principle of Non-Subscription! Could this new version of the Non-Subscription principle be reduced to greater absurdity?"

The Herald concludes the article to which we have been referring with a notice of the recent correspondence between Dr. Montgomery and Mr. Tayler, and says, that the subject of their controversy is little more than the difference between *tweedledum* and *tweeledge*. Whatever opinion our contemporary may entertain respecting the bodily resurrection of our Lord, all must have perceived that the truthfulness of the Gospel narrative is involved; and, if *The Herald* considers it a small matter whether the Evangelists wrote the truth, or recorded falsehoods or delusions, we are thankful that we have no sympathy with views so very liberal. We find no fault with *The Herald* for giving expression to its opinions; but, even at the risk of being considered bigotted and narrow-minded, we must express our deep regret that such views should be propounded under the name of Unitarian Christianity.

INTELLIGENCE.

THE LATE REV. MAXWELL DAVIDSON.

FROM a memoir of the Rev. M. Davidson, written by his friend, the Rev. E. Kell, of Southampton, which appeared in the March number of the *Christian Reformer*, we make the following extracts, believing that they will be read with interest by many in this country to whom Mr. Davidson was well known in earlier life, and by whom he is affectionately remembered.

The Rev. Maxwell Davidson was born in 1809, in the Parish of Killinchy, county Down. The family were of Scotch extraction, and had settled in Ireland in 1641. He received his school educa-

tion under the Rev. Thomas Read. He went to the college department of the Royal Belfast Institution in 1828, where, after passing through the course with credit, he received, in 1831, the general certificate, which is equivalent to a degree in Arts. Leaving college for a time, he occupied for four years the situation of resident and general assistant in a most respectable boarding academy at Crumlin; and as the venerable Principal, the Rev. Nathaniel Alexander, was then advanced in years and exceedingly infirm, the whole responsibility of the tuition and superintendence generally devolved on Mr. Davidson. On his return to the Belfast Institution for the completion of his theological course, he was engaged for a year as a resident and chief assistant in Dr. Montgomery's boarding and day-school at Belfast, where he acquitted himself with much fidelity and success. Being brought up as a Calvinistic Presbyterian under an Orthodox Presbytery, he studied theology, in 1837, at Belfast, under Dr. Hanna, a Trinitarian. In the pursuit of his theological researches, he saw reason to give up the religious views in which he had been educated, and at a time when he had much promise of pecuniary emolument in connexion with the Calvinistic Presbyterians, joined the Unitarians. He was licensed to preach the Gospel by the Remonstrant Presbytery of Bangor, August 15, 1836. He accepted an engagement for some months with the congregation at Billingshurst, Sussex, from which he removed to take charge of the congregation at Mead Row, Godalming, as successor to the Rev. Edwin Chapman. Residing at the neighbouring town of Guildford, he united the offices of schoolmaster and pastor. He was very successful in sustaining the Sunday-school at Mead Row, and in attaching to himself and to his ministry the young men of the congregation. He was exceedingly useful as well as beloved in this pastorate; but after six years' ministry, having received, through the medium of the Committee of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, an offer to become tutor in the family of John Duerdin, Esq., of Melbourne, Australia, with the prospect (if circumstances should permit) of conducting worship in that district, he resolved to embrace it. He arrived at Melbourne in November, 1851, and was cordially received by Mr. Duerdin. The circumstances of the place at his first arrival did not augur well for the establishment of Unitarian worship. The mania for gold-digging was then at its height, and the public mind was too much absorbed to give earnest attention to the support of a purer faith than that to which it had long been accustomed. That this was a season to Mr. Davidson of great mental anxiety and earnest deliberation as to the time for the commencement of the attempt to open Unitarian worship, the writer of this memoir has strong evidence in letters addressed to himself at this period. But at length the die was cast; the attempt, with the blessing of God, was to be made. An advertisement was issued requesting persons favourably disposed to Unitarianism to meet in the Mechanics' Institution for mutual recognition and consultation; and, much to his delight and that of the few staunch friends who had encouraged the undertaking, a sufficient number assembled to render the project of commencing public worship highly desirable and

encouraging. Eight gentlemen, with Mr. Davidson, allowed themselves to be the referees to persons desirous of establishing Unitarian worship, whose names deserve to be gratefully remembered as founders of the Unitarian Church at Melbourne. These were, Alexander Wilson, John Duerdin, John Stevenson, A. Campbell Brown, William Stevenson, W. A. C. A'Beckett, Henry Montgomery, William Small, and Thomas C. Bateman, Hon. Sec. The Rev. M. Davidson was chosen as their minister, but he generously declined to receive any emolument till their Church was organized and an edifice erected. The little band of disciples met for the first time to worship in the Mechanics' Institution on January 30, 1853. It was an eventful day. Thus was Mr. Davidson, by the force of his character, his prudence, temper, zeal, and piety, under the Divine blessing, the founder of the first Unitarian Church in Australia, supported by a considerable share of the intelligence and respectability of Melbourne, numbering among his hearers Sir Wm. A'Becket, the Chief Justice of the colony, and gaining for itself the consideration of the other religious bodies of the town, as manifested by the respectful manner in which the press recorded the congregational proceedings. The establishment of this congregation was of great importance also, as lending the advantage of its example to other towns in Australia for the commencement in them of Unitarian worship, as was evident in the successive establishment of the Unitarian congregations of Sydney and Adelaide.

Mr. Davidson left Melbourne for England, September, 1857, having resigned his pastoral office in the previous May. Declining health and other reasons conspired to make him desirous of returning to England. On Mr. Davidson's return to England, December 30, 1857, he spent six months in visiting his friends. It was a circumstance most agreeable to his wishes that the congregation at Wareham, in the district in which he most wished to settle, being then without a minister, sent him an unanimous invitation. In his new charge he devoted himself to every claim upon him with the same fidelity as at Melbourne. The respectable and intelligent congregation at Wareham appreciated his services as a preacher, and esteemed him as a friend, and the evening congregation was increasing. Their largest congregational tea-party took place at the Town Hall during his ministry. He had also good prospects in his private school. His brother ministers in the south, who met him at their annual ministerial gathering, at Ringwood, in September last, cannot but look back with peculiar though saddened interest, while they call to mind the warm greetings of his friendly spirit, and the animated part he took in their discussion as to the best mode of celebrating the bi-centenary of 1862. Little thought they that ere that time arrived he should be taken from them! He was a man of genial and affectionate disposition, and his conversation was remarkable for freshness as well as purity of thought. Such meetings were peculiarly congenial to his heart, and to them he always contributed increased vivacity. His sterling integrity, his unaffected piety and benevolence, endeared him to all. But it was the will of him who is all-wise that he should be removed from

this scene of labour and translated to a nobler sphere. Symptoms of serious illness from an affection of the heart manifested themselves about a month before his final seizure. He was for some weeks unable, without inconvenience, to walk up stairs, but continued to pursue his usual duties, and preached twice on the Sunday only two days before his almost sudden death, November 19, 1861, at the age of fifty-two.

THE REMONSTRANT PEACE CONFERENCE AND THE REV. WILLIAM HALL.

We published, last month, an agreement unanimously adopted at a meeting of ministers of the Remonstrant Synod, who fairly represented the different parties into which that body is unhappily divided, and who believed that, without any compromise of principle on either side, such a measure might restore peace. One of the ministers who signed that agreement was the Rev. William Hall; but we have received from that gentleman a printed circular in which, without explaining the circumstances which have induced him so soon to change his mind, he requests that his "name may be looked on as withdrawn." He objects to the statement that the Scriptures contain a Divine Revelation, as either "so indefinite that it asserts virtually nothing;" or so definite that "it must be looked on as an attempt to limit and decide the question as to Inspiration." He thinks that a question requiring the acknowledgment of the "sufficiency of Scripture," and of the "right of private judgment," might be asked; but that, if any congregation objected to Presbyterian questioning, no question should be asked. He states farther, that it has been his opinion for some time past, that "the best plan would be for the Presbytery simply to certify to the education, ability, and character of a candidate, and then to leave it entirely with the congregation, for themselves to decide on the adequacy of his faith."

We need scarcely say, that from the sentiments put forward in this circular by Mr. Hall we totally dissent. For one who is a candidate for the office of Christian Minister to withhold, under the plea of Christian liberty, his acknowledgment of the Divine Revelation contained in the Scriptures, appears very extraordinary; but to expect a Presbytery to sanction, by the act of ordination, the appointment of any one to the ministry of Christ, of whose opinions respecting revelation they know nothing, and who, for aught they know, may be a mere Deist, is simply absurd.

SECESSION OF THE CONGREGATION OF MONEYREA FROM THE REMONSTRANT SYNOD OF ULSTER.

On Tuesday, April 1st, the above-named old and respectable Congregation demanded of the Presbytery of Bangor, by a deputation, that, although constituting only one-third of the Remonstrant Synod, the Presbytery should consent to violate the solemnly-enacted laws and salutary usages of the entire church. With this

demand the Presbytery declined compliance, as a matter of course, and the deputation then announced the separation of their Society from the Remonstrant Synod—a hasty and irrational proceeding, which can be injurious to none, except to themselves and their future ministers.

We have been informed of long-continued and unscrupulous misrepresentations, oral and written, by which this consummation was effected; but we shall not occupy our pages by recording the names and doings of the actors in this drama of secession. It is sufficient to say that, by various arts, and in utter ignorance of the *real* state of the question, they obtained a majority; but, it is satisfactory, that very many of the oldest and most respectable members of the congregation entirely disapprove of the steps which have been taken; and the following “Notice,” entered by *all* the Elders upon the Session-book, shows the sentiments of the principal office-bearers of the Society—men than whom there are none more worthy of esteem in any church:—

“NOTICE.—We, the Session of Moneyrea Congregation, beg leave to tender our resignation from this day, most heartily condemning the proceedings of the majority of this Congregation in leaving the Presbytery of Bangor, and being unanimous in thinking that every minister should not only tell his belief to *his hearers*, but to *any one who may ask him*.

“We shall have much pleasure in delivering the book and cash in hand to any person whom the Congregation may appoint. After having served a period of twenty-six years we now cease to act.

“Signed,

“JAMES M’MASTER.

“JOHN MISKELLY.

“MONEYREA, *April 6th*, 1862.”

“DAVID ORR.

THE PRESBYTERY OF ANTRIM.

On Wednesday, April 2nd, the quarterly meeting of this Body was held in the Second Meeting-house, Belfast. The Rev. S. C. Nelson was appointed Moderator for the ensuing year. A letter was read from the Rev. J. S. Porter, resigning the office of Clerk, which he had held for the last twenty-eight years. A resolution was unanimously passed, on the motion of the Rev. John Porter, accepting his resignation and recording the deep sense which the Presbytery entertained of his valuable services, and their regret at his withdrawing from their Body.

The Rev. John Jellie was elected Clerk.

After the reading of Minutes, the case of the Ballyclare Congregation was taken up. The Moderator read the report of three commissioners appointed to proceed to Ballyclare and endeavour to restore peace. The commissioners stated that they found the Meeting-house gates locked against them, and that Mr. Ledlie, the Secretary, refused, on the part of the Session and Committee, to open them, alleging that they did not recognize the authority of the Presbytery of Antrim, as they had left that body, and also that

the Moderator of the Presbytery had informed him that they had no authority to act. The Moderator read a letter from the Session and Committee, in which it was stated, that, at a meeting of the Congregation, it was unanimously resolved that they had ceased to be connected with the Antrim Presbytery. Several commissioners were present from Ballyclare, one of whom laid before the Presbytery a protest, alleged to be signed by sixty-three seatholders, against any attempt to withdraw from the Presbytery of Antrim, inasmuch as such withdrawal might endanger the fundamental principles on the maintenance of which the property of the Congregation is held, and as such course, if it could be successfully adopted, would deprive the Congregation of its Meeting-house and Manse, and would otherwise interfere with the rights and privileges of them and their minister. A similar protest had been given in from the Rev. John Hall. After some discussion, it was moved by Mr. Mulligan (Elder), seconded by the Rev. D. Gordon, and unanimously resolved, "That the Congregation of Ballyclare be recommended to proceed to the election of proper officers, without any reference to dissenting members who have withdrawn from this Presbytery."

A memorial was presented by commissioners from Moneyrea, praying that that congregation might be taken under the care of their reverend Body—alleging that they had withdrawn from the Remonstrant Presbytery of Bangor, in consequence of the Remonstrant Synod having violated its fundamental principles, and rendered it imperative on each minister, before ordination, to answer in the affirmative certain doctrinal questions. On the motion of the Rev. Hugh Moore, the prayer of the memorialists was complied with, and a committee was appointed to take charge of the Congregation.

Replications to the Three Protests given in by the seceding members were read, and ordered to be entered on the Minutes and to be printed for circulation at the expense of the Presbytery.

Mr. Gardner (Elder), objected to the form of installation adopted by the Rev. J. S. Porter at the recent settlement of the Rev. J. M'Ferran in Antrim, and stated, that to ask the minister any questions respecting his Christian faith, or to seek from him any declaration of belief for the satisfaction of his ordainers, was contrary to the rule and practice of the Presbytery. A resolution to this effect was moved by Mr. Gardner, seconded by Mr. Murland, and unanimously adopted. A letter was read from the Rev. J. S. Porter, Clerk of the Northern Presbytery of Antrim, informing the Body that the Congregations of Antrim, Ballyclare, First Belfast, Holywood, and Larne, had withdrawn from their jurisdiction, and had formed themselves into a distinct and separate Presbytery, and requesting that they would have the goodness to appoint two of their members to meet two members of the New Presbytery, for the purpose of coming to an amicable arrangement respecting the future management of those funds and other properties in which the ten congregations, till lately constituting the Presbytery of Antrim, had hitherto been conjointly interested.

In reference to Ballyclare, it was remarked by Mr. Mulligan, that the respected minister and sixty-three seatholders had not withdrawn, and a Ballyclare commissioner said, that the other side could not show nearly so many genuine seatholders.

A resolution was then passed, expressing regret that certain congregations and their ministers had been induced to withdraw, and affirming that they still adhered to the ancient usages and practices of the Presbytery of Antrim. After some routine business, the Presbytery adjourned.

THE NORTHERN PRESBYTERY OF ANTRIM.

On Friday, April 4th, the first quarterly meeting of this newly formed Body was held in the Meeting-house of the First Congregation, Rosemary Street, Belfast. The introductory religious services were conducted by the Rev. C. J. M'Alester, after which the Moderator, the Rev. W. Bruce, preached from Gal. v. 1. An outline of the sermon, which was peculiarly suitable to the occasion, is given in the earlier part of our present number. The Rev. J. S. Porter, as clerk, called the roll, and then stated the substance of the minutes of the preliminary meeting of Feb. 21, and documents referring to it, stating that they extended over 150 pages, and suggesting that their authentication might be ascertained by a Committee. This course was adopted.

Dr. Montgomery, who was present, was invited to sit and deliberate with the Presbytery, but declined doing so, as he thought it more judicious not to take part in the proceedings.

A desire was expressed that the sermon of the Moderator should be printed, and also a narrative of the circumstances which led to a secession from the Presbytery of Antrim and the formation of this body.

The Rev. J. S. Porter then read resolutions passed by the congregations of First Belfast, Antrim, Larne, Holywood, and the Session and Committee of Ballyclare, resigning their connexion with the Presbytery of Antrim, and joining the Northern Presbytery of Antrim.

The Rev. CLASSON PORTER moved the first resolution:—"That, by the foregoing resolutions declaring the adhesion of those congregations which had resumed to themselves or to their session and committee the power of finally determining the ecclesiastical body with which they should be connected, the Northern Presbytery of Antrim is now fully constituted; that the appointment of the Rev. Wm. Bruce as Moderator, and of the Rev. J. Scott Porter as clerk, for the ensuing twelve months, as agreed to at the preliminary meeting of ministers and elders held on the 21st February, 1862, is hereby confirmed; and that the meetings of the said Presbytery be held at the times and in the manner then specified."

This resolution was unanimously adopted.

Resolutions were then passed re-affirming and ratifying the resolutions passed at the preliminary meeting of Feb. 21st, in reference to the Six Propositions submitted to the General Synod of Ulster by

the Presbytery of Antrim in 1726 ; and also to the Three Testaments handed in at the meeting of the Presbytery of Antrim on Jan. 1st.

The Rev. J. S. PORTER then moved—"That we do hereby, in like manner, adopt, ratify, and re-affirm the resolution agreed to at said meeting of ministers and elders, declaring adherence to the motion which was proposed at the said meeting of the Presbytery of Antrim by the Rev. C. J. M'Alester ; and which was rejected with indignation by the majority of the said Presbytery." He said it was the practice to require, in some form or another, from every candidate a declaration of his belief in Christ's Divine mission and authority as the Son of God and the Saviour of men ; and he considered that it would be a gross dereliction of duty to receive him without such a declaration. If any man refusing to make such a declaration applied for license or ordination, he knew the answer that he would give him. He expressed his surprise that any Presbytery confessing allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ would think of acting on any other principle ; but seeing that there is such a Presbytery—a Presbytery which has rejected such a proposition with indignation—he felt himself constrained by a sense of duty to himself and to the congregation over which he was placed as minister, to declare the principles by which he was determined to be guided. The resolution was seconded, and passed unanimously.

The Rev. C. J. M'ALESTER moved a resolution setting forth the allegiance of the Presbytery to the Lord Jesus Christ, their acknowledgment of the sufficiency of Scripture, the right and duty of private judgment, and the rejection of all human authority in matters of faith. In speaking to this resolution, Mr. M'Alester referred to the formation, nearly 140 years ago, of that Presbytery from which they were now compelled, under a deep sense of duty, to withdraw. That noble band who organized that body, clearly understood the value of Christian truth, and the nature of Christian freedom ; and under the banner which they fearlessly unfurled, and which, for so many years, their successors upheld, manifold blessings had flowed to society. With that distinguished body the name of Bruce has been long and honourably associated, and while some are bold enough to say that there was no need for the step we have taken in seceding, reflecting men will be satisfied that it was no light or trivial matter which could lead our moderator, after his own ministry of half a century in the Presbytery, and ancestral associations with it so intimate and hallowed, now to withdraw from its connexion. The founders of the Antrim Presbytery based their Church on the Bible. Other Churches had been built on something more—as on the decrees of councils, on articles and human creeds. These their forefathers swept away, only that they might rest on the simple teachings of Scripture. If others fancy that such a foundation is not necessary, that there may be a Church whose ministers need not affirm or hold a belief in the authority of the Bible, they have a perfect right in this free country to make any other basis they may please ; but they should then have withdrawn from the Presbytery, and not have set aside its plainest principles. They have not done so, and hence the painful duty that has de-

volved on the minority to secede. There is much to regret in this course, but good may result from it; it may prove to the world more clearly than the most explicit declarations, that while they had no faith in human articles, or in fallible men, they had faith in the Scriptures as containing a Divine Revelation, and that through good report and bad report they would cling to Christ as their only master, and to the Scriptures as their only rule of faith.

Mr. W. J. C. ALLEN, in seconding this resolution, protested against the interpretation that had been lately put on the words—"The Sufficiency of Scripture." He regarded them as being more than a protest against the infallibility of the Pope, and not as giving them liberty to cast aside all faith in the Scriptures.

The resolution was carried unanimously.

Commissioners attended from the Ballyclare Congregation. Mr. Ledlie, one of the Commissioners, explained the circumstances which led to the present unhappy state of the congregation, and said that, owing to the spirit that now prevailed, nothing remained for them but a separation, and the majority were willing that it should be arranged on equitable terms. He stated that the minority had been unfairly increased by residents of Belfast and several members of one family applying for sittings. It was resolved that a committee of Presbytery be appointed to endeavour to bring about an amicable arrangement of matters in the Ballyclare Congregation.

The Moderator and Mr. Allen were nominated to arrange with a deputation of the Presbytery of Antrim for the future management of the funds and other properties in which there was a joint interest.

The proceedings concluded with prayer.

DOMESTIC MISSION TO THE POOR OF BELFAST.

On Wednesday Evening, April 9th, the annual meeting of the friends and supporters of the Domestic Mission to the Poor of Belfast, was held in the Upper School-room of the commodious and spacious building just completed. The President of the Society, the Rev. W. Bruce, was called to the chair, and opened the proceedings with devotional exercises. He then made some introductory remarks, congratulating the friends of the Mission on their meeting that evening in their new premises so admirably adapted to the purposes for which they have been erected. James M. Darbishire, Esq., the Secretary, read the report of the Managing Committee. It stated that the various agencies in connexion with the charity had been in active operation during the past year. Alluding to the Rev. Henry Eachus, who has been for several years connected with this institution, it says:—"Especially would your committee refer to the zeal and judgment with which your missionary has discharged his arduous and responsible duties. His visits and ministrations to the poor, combined with his sympathy in their trials and sorrows, have caused him to be much valued and respected by them; and your committee trust that Mr. Eachus may ever derive satisfaction from the assurance that he has assisted materially

in mitigating the sufferings of many of the destitute poor of Belfast. Your committee regret to state that, recently, they have received a communication from Mr. Eachus, in which he informed them that he had 'received and accepted an invitation to become Minister of the Unitarian Church, Pudsey, which is connected with the West Riding Mission, Yorkshire.' Your committee are taking active steps to procure a successor to Mr. Eachus." "In the report of last year it was stated that Mr. Whitla 'undertook, at his own expense, to build a school-house, thus leaving the committee at liberty to spend their own money in furnishing the schools, enclosing the yards, and building outhouses,' &c. The committee have now the pleasure of acknowledging still further obligations to this gentleman, for he has not only furnished the schools and enclosed the yards, but he has purchased the adjoining plot of ground, and contributed one-half the expense of making the streets by which the school-house is approached, and the want of which would be a great obstacle to the success of the schools. Your committee are thus prepared, as soon as there is a supply of bricks, for commencing a missionary's residence, and such other accommodations as may be required for the industrial purposes of the mission. In concluding this report, the committee beg to advert to the bequest of £100 left to the charity by the late Miss M'Kedy, who, though unable to take an active part in the management of its affairs, was among its earliest and most generous supporters. They feel deeply sensible of the loss they have sustained by the decease of this amiable and excellent lady, and also of other valued friends connected with the mission, whose places it will be difficult to supply."

The Rev. J. Scott Porter read a report of the Daily Schools, which was very satisfactory; also the report of the Ladies' Committee, which represented the various departments under their care as being efficiently managed; and stated that a Small District Visiting Committee had recently been formed.

The Rev. H. Eachus then read a report of his labours, as missionary to the poor, which was of a very interesting and gratifying character.

Mr. M. ANDREWS (Treasurer), read a Statement of Accounts.

Mr. W. HARTLEY moved and Mr. J. Campbell seconded a resolution to the effect, that the several Reports submitted be received and printed for circulation among the subscribers.

Mr. A. O'D. TAYLOR moved, "That we desire to record our gratitude to Almighty God for the large measure of usefulness which he has been pleased to vouchsafe to the labours of our missionary; to the Sunday and Daily Schools connected with this institution; to the exertions of the Clothing Committee; and to the other instrumentalities which have been brought into action by the Domestic Mission to the Poor of Belfast; and that, feeling the vast importance of these varied agencies, we recommend this truly Christian undertaking to the continued patronage and support of the pious and benevolent members of our religious denominations."

This resolution was seconded by Mr. W. CAMPBELL.

The Rev. C. J. M'ALESTER then moved a vote of thanks to the several committees and officers of the Charity, and, in doing so, took an opportunity of dwelling on the importance of the Mission and its essentially Christian character.

Mr. R. MACADAM seconded this resolution.

The Rev. J. S. PORTER proposed a resolution expressive of gratitude to Mr. Whitla for that building—a munificent donation which he had presented to the Domestic Mission—and their best wishes for his enjoying that reward that he looked for in this life, in feeling the usefulness of the institution to which he had been so generous a benefactor. It was a grateful mode in which Mr. Whitla had chosen to convey to them that munificent gift. He had presented it to them as a “grateful acknowledgement to Almighty God for very many long-continued blessings, and an affectionate remembrance of Ellen Whitla and Jane Whitla, his much loved, now departed, wife and sister.” Without further observation, he would move—“That, meeting for the first time in this building, erected for the purpose of this Mission, by the liberality of Valentine Whitla, Esq., we feel ourselves called upon to record our gratitude to him for this munificent donation, and our deep sympathy with those feelings which the tablet, placed by his order in the room in which we are now assembled, so touchingly commemorates.”

Mr. WM. H. GREER seconded the resolution with a few remarks.

The motion was carried unanimously.

Mr. JAMES M. DARBISHIRE moved—“That, while we deeply regret the approaching termination of the engagement of Mr. Eachus as our Domestic Missionary to the Poor, we request him to accept the assurance of our esteem and sympathy; our high appreciation of his labours and services; and our cordial wishes for his prosperity, happiness, and usefulness in the scene to which his Christian exertions are now to be transferred.”

Mr. T. A. HILL seconded the motion, which was carried.

The Rev. Mr. EACHUS returned thanks.

OBITUARY.

On April 3rd, at Roselands, Anne, relict of the late James Wallace, Esq., Muckamore Lodge.

On April 19th, at Franklin Place, Belfast, Anne, daughter of Mr William M'Caw, aged 15 years.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Communications for the Editor, to be addressed by post to Rev. C. J. M'Alister, Holywood; or, otherwise, to 28, Arthur Street, Belfast.

Orders for the work and business communications to be sent to the Agent of the Society, 28, Arthur Street.

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[No. 5.

SAINT BARTHOLOMEW.

WE know very little about St. Bartholomew. His name occurs only four times in the New Testament, and then merely in the catalogues of the Twelve Apostles, so that we can say nothing more of him than that he was an Apostle of Christ, and that, consequently, he must have witnessed those events in the Saviour's history at which *all* the Apostles are said to have been present.

But where Scripture is silent, tradition is apt to be loquacious, and she has recorded many facts respecting the Apostle Bartholomew for which we might search the writings of the Evangelists in vain. She tells us that he was the nephew of the King of Syria, or, perhaps, his grandson; for the tradition has come down to us through a Latin channel, and the word in the legend is *nepos*, which may denote either degree of relationship. But this can scarcely be reconciled with what we know concerning the birth and social rank of the companions of the Saviour. They were not heathen princes, but Jewish peasants, fishermen, tax-gatherers, and such like. Yet, there is a foundation for this fancy. In the Syriac language, the name Bartholomew signifies "*the son of Ptolemy*," and Ptolemy was the name of a line of kings. Cruden, in the list of proper names, at the end of his Concordance, interprets Bartholomew as signifying "*A son that suspends the waters!*" whatever that may mean. But he is quite wrong. The word means simply "*the son of Ptolemy*," and Ptolemy, as has been stated, was a name common to a line of kings: but they reigned in Egypt, not in Syria. Moreover, the name of Ptolemy was not confined to them; it was borne by all sorts of people;

indeed, the first of the princes who bore it had been a coachman originally,—and the ancestor from whom the Apostle Bartholomew derived his name may have moved in a very humble rank. To suppose that a man must have been a prince, because his father or his grandfather was called Ptolemy, is much the same as to assert, that every Englishman who had an ancestor named *George*, must belong to the royal family.

Tradition tells us further, that St. Bartholomew preached the Gospel in India. Pantaneus is said to have found among the Christians in India, the Gospel according to Matthew, in Hebrew, which had been left among their ancestors by St. Bartholomew. He is also said to have preached in Armenia; but the accounts given of his doctrine are few and unsatisfactory. A writer named Abdias, affirms that St. Bartholomew had assured a certain king of Armenia, named *Polimius*, that “Mary, the mother of Christ, was the first woman who made to God a vow of perpetual virginity.” But there never was a king of Armenia named *Polimius*; and Bartholomew could never have told to any one the story which this wretched scribbler puts into his mouth; for the uniform testimony of Scripture is, that Mary was a married woman, and the sacred writers plainly intimate that she was the mother of several children. This is all that tradition has to tell,—all, at least, that she tells about the preaching of St. Bartholomew. It is not much, and it is not true.

There is a pretty general agreement among mediæval authorities that St. Bartholomew was put to death in Armenia. According to Nicephorus, the Apostle was crucified in the city of Hierapolis. But he did not die at that time; he was saved by a miracle. He was seized again; and his persecutors, warned by former experience, determined that nothing should save him this time. They first stripped him of his skin, and then hanged him. This was effectual: he died.

Most biographers end their story with the death of their heroes. But tradition can go beyond the grave, and give us information of what passes in the unseen world. Abdias, who has already been cited, says that “a dæmon,” when questioned concerning the fate of St. Bartholomew, replied, “that for the last six and twenty years his clothes

had never grown dirty, and that for the last twenty-five years his shoes had never grown old!" This response, which, if it had any foundation, was probably the raving of a maniac, was treasured up as an oracle, and is handed down to us as a saying equally truthful and important—which, no doubt, it is. We might expect to find something more tangible in the traditions respecting his bodily remains; but the accounts which have reached us are not consistent with themselves. One author tells us that in the year A.D. 500, the Emperor Anastasius discovered the reliques of St. Bartholomew,—where or how he discovered them is not stated,—and that he transported them to Mesopotamia. But Theodorus Studites, who has left behind him a laboured encomium on this Apostle, tells us a different tale. He says that the inhabitants of Albanopolis, where the remains of St. Bartholomew were interred, being annoyed by the multitude of the miracles which were wrought at his tomb, and the tombs of four other martyrs who were buried beside him, dug up the remains of the five holy men, and launched them in their stone coffins upon the Euxine Sea. The five sarcophagi floated down the Euxine, through the Bosphorus, the Propontis, the Hellespont, the Ægean and the Ionian Seas, till they reached the western promontory of Sicily. Here the little flotilla separated, the coffins distributing themselves among the cities which the martyrs had respectively chosen for the resting-places of their bones. Those of St. Bartholomew directed their course to the island now called Lipari, and were received with every mark of respect: insomuch that a volcano, which had been burning furiously near the spot where they landed, immediately removed to the distance of seven furlongs, lest the saint should be incommoded.

We may smile at these legends; and no doubt they have their ludicrous side; but from another point of view they are melancholy enough. Melancholy or laughable, they were propagated, accepted, and believed in the very same ages, and often by the very same men, who have bequeathed to us the doctrines of the Trinity, and Original Sin, and Transubstantiation, and Saint Worship, and Apostolical Succession, and the power of the clergy to forgive sins. All are coinage of the same mint.

St. Bartholomew is invoked in prayers in the Churches of Greece and Rome, and in those Oriental Churches which practise the Invocation of Saints. In the Roman ritual there are no less than two days set apart for the commemoration of this Apostle; though the 24th of August is the day that is always understood when the "Feast of St. Bartholomew" is spoken of. In the service for that day he is prayed to by name, and entreated to intercede with God on behalf of his worshippers. To make the absurdity complete, the worshippers immediately turn aside to intercede with God for him, beseeching the Almighty to hear his prayers, and to bestow the grace of heaven upon themselves (*ejus suffragiis*) through his suffrages in their favour. It is worthy of notice, that in the Roman ritual there is a prayer which is always offered up on the Feast of St. Bartholomew, supplicating for support and deliverance in time of persecution.

What makes this worthy of notice is the connexion which exists between the name of St. Bartholomew and the memory of many atrocious acts of persecution, which were committed by misguided men of various creeds in ancient days;—some of them by persons who rose from the utterance of this very prayer to the performance of deeds of massacre and murder.

The place which was most frequently selected for executing the writ "for the burning of heretics" in England, was the part of Smithfield which lies directly opposite the gate of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, in the City of London. Here many Lollards were burnt, in the days which preceded the Reformation; here the bloody Henry VIII. and his no less merciless daughters, wreaked their vengeance alternately on Protestants and Catholics, as the wavering balance of royal caprice or sacerdotal influence inclined to either side. Here, also, several suffered in the flames, for maintaining the sacred truth, that God is One; Joanna Bocher, Van Paris, Wielmacker, Van Toort, Legate, and others. Mr. Legate suffered in the year 1611, under the reign of "the British Solomon," King James I.; and two years afterwards, Mr. Wightman was put to death at Lichfield for the same opinions, being the last public execution for heresy in England.

Every one is aware that on the day of St. Bartholomew,

in the year 1572, a general massacre was made of all the Protestant nobility and citizens who could be discovered in the city of Paris. They had been invited thither by the court, under pretence of celebrating the nuptials of the young King of Navarre with the sister of the French monarch; and the wretched sovereign of the land, King Charles IX., not only encouraged the perpetrators of the inhuman outrage, but fired with his own hand upon his heretical subjects, who were flying unarmed before the face of the furious rabble which sought their lives. In that one dismal night, three thousand were murdered in Paris alone; and twenty thousand more were, in the course of a few weeks, slaughtered in various towns and provinces throughout the kingdom, which imitated the example of the capital. No age, rank, or sex were spared. The hoary hairs of Admiral de Coligny did not protect him; he was the first victim slain on that bloody night. And hundreds of infants, born and unborn, slain in cold blood, and under circumstances of wanton barbarity, attested the zeal of those who took that method of rendering God service.

And, just ninety years afterwards, England had its Feast of St. Bartholomew,—not indeed a day of blood, but a day of weeping and wailing and bitter grief. On the 24th of August, 1662, upwards of 2000 worthy ministers were expelled from their livings by the operation of the Act of Uniformity, which required every beneficed clergyman, and every one who held any office in the public schools and colleges throughout the kingdom, to declare their assent and consent to all and everything contained in the Book of Common Prayer. This many among them could not conscientiously do; and rather than do an act against which their heart and soul revolted, they submitted to the loss of all that this world holds dear. But the sufferings of the ejected ministers, and the manner in which their sufferings were over-ruled for the growth of religious freedom and truth throughout the world, form a theme too wide to be discussed at the close of a paper such as this.

T.

SALVATION BY CHRIST.

SALVATION by Christ is the subject of the New Testament. To save men was the one purpose of Christ's coming; and the word salvation includes in it all that is highest and most hopeful in man's destiny. Christ came to save that which is lost, to save his people from their sins, to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, to redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

But how does Christ save men? Not by any single method, but by whatever he was, or did, or taught, or suffered, through which a human soul is redeemed from sin. Here I do not speak of what was necessary, in order that God might forgive sin, nor how Christ's mission accorded with the secret purposes of the Most High. These mysteries are above us. It is not necessary that we should understand them. What I wish to show is, that Christ saves men by arousing and awakening the better life of the soul; that till this is done nothing is done, and that with this all is done, and that it is done through means as varied as human wants and circumstances. There were Pharisees, probably, saved by Christ's rebuke of their hypocrisy. There were sinners, doubtless, saved by his compassionate friendliness. The guilty woman that knelt and washed his feet with her tears, he won by encouraging words. I can imagine that there were children on whom his hands were laid in benediction who, through the memory of that act, afterwards became apostles and martyrs. Through these and many other ways he still acts on mankind. Christ saves men by every better thought which his words put into their hearts, by the holier purposes which he awakens, by the benignity of his example, by the power of self-sacrifice, by the divinity of his death, by encouragements and by warnings. Sometimes his power is felt through life; his name is the first on the lips of childhood, and the last in the fluttering and feeble breath of the dying hour; and sometimes his influence is not felt till trial, or sorrow, or remorse open the heart to the Helper and the Comforter. But whatever the method of salvation, the result is the

same. It is a turning from sin to righteousness. It is the awakening of the soul—a new birth to a higher and Christian life. Without this there is no salvation, and with it, whatever the method, the man is saved.—*E. Peabody.*

THE LOST ONE.

THE twilight around me is closing,
The jar of the day-time is o'er,
And thoughts that were softly reposing
Have sprung into being once more.
The hearth blazes bright, although sorrow
Sits drooping with heart-springing tears ;
And no more may the dream of to-morrow
Be nurtured by hopes or by fears.

'Tis the hour, my lost one so cherished—
'Tis the hour that made thee my own,
When the morn, with its bustle, had perished,
When its duties and pleasures were flown.
When soft came thy little feet creeping,
I hailed thee a blessing so pure,
That my joy had oft sunk into weeping,
With a dread that it might not endure.

Oh ! love hath prophetic foreseeing—
Thou wert not for earth and its woes ;
And ere sorrow had touched thy young being,
Thy glorified spirit arose—
Arose to the radiant sphere yonder,
Where sighs and repinings are hush'd—
Oh ! how could I wish thee to wander
In paths where each joy might be crush'd ?

Yet I weep that thine eyes are beholding
Those fresh blowing flowers no more ;
And forget that for thee are enfolding
The amaranth wreaths of that shore,
Where tempests have all ceased their wailing,
And the earth-stricken spirit hath rest ;
Where, if trust hath been true and unfailing,
All shadows must fade from the breast.

I pine that thine ears are ungladden'd
 By the bird-notes that float on the breeze ;
 And forget thou can'st never be saddened
 When the Winter winds mourn through the trees.
 The lilac hangs heavy with blossoms,
 The daisy springs thick from the sod,
 But the bud that was nursed in my bosom
 Hath passed to the presence of God.

The glorious laburnum is wreathing
 Its garlands wherever we turn,
 The hawthorn its perfume is breathing,
 Poured freely from nature's rich urn :
 The world, in its freshness, rejoices,
 As if for the first time so fair ;
 And the winds, with their many-toned voices,
 Are hush'd like the spirit's low prayer.

Oh ! Being of goodness and glory,
 I dare not repine before Thee ;
 Though pain toucheth more than the hoary,
 Though infancy droops on the knee.
 While love such as Thine is onleading,
 Though thorns must be met in the way,
 Yet the feet, although weary and bleeding,
 Shall win through the narrowest way.

M.

IMPRESSIONS OF DR. TUCKERMAN.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE CHRISTIAN UNITARIAN."

DEAR SIR,—The valuable and interesting article in your May number, on Joseph Tuckerman, recalled vividly to my mind an interview with that excellent man, many years since, at the house of a common and venerated friend ; and the impression made at the time can never be effaced. A large company met the Doctor by invitation,—Sunday-school teachers and others interested in Christian progress,—and none can forget the simple and fatherly manner of his intercourse ; the countenance full of the most benevolent expression ; the eye beaming with

kindly intelligence; the mouth speaking right things; those it was a privilege to hear. He gave us anecdotes of his experience in teaching, and of his aptness in communicating divine knowledge, and he left on us all the conviction that appears to have seized the mind of Dr. Follen—"Truly, he is a great man:" yet great not so much from mere intellectual stature, as from the unselfishness and the purity of his aims, his directness of purpose, and the consecration of his time—his whole soul—to the one blessed work of human redemption. It was, as one of the company remarked, not so much in what the Doctor said, as in the way in which it was said, that the charm of his conversation consisted—the look, the tone which won the heart to him and his plans; he made us feel that doing good was the great business of life. Truly, he was a disciple whom Jesus would have loved, had the great master been on earth. Tuckerman was ready to follow his Lord wherever he led.

We cannot but ascribe, under Divine Providence, the substantial and most observable good done by Domestic Missions, mainly to the example set by Tuckerman, and the influence of his character on the work. He led the way, previously untrodden, and he shewed how an apparently very simple idea might be developed into something sublime,—worthy the attention of the philosopher as well as the philanthropist,—a scheme which the churches could zealously patronize, and which all who love their fellow-men can do something to promote. I feel it becomes other pens, rather than mine, to dilate on the manifold advantages of Tuckerman's plan, together with the great need of its being carried into vigorous action everywhere, Human nature is the same in all places, and in every city, in every village, there is abundance of ignorance and vice, of poverty, of destitution; there will be found the sinner to be warned, and if possible, reclaimed; the erring to be guided back to the fold, and on to immortality; the heavy in heart to be consoled; the down-trodden to be lifted up and assured of sympathy and aid; the poor, to whom the Gospel should be preached. Tuckerman had the highest opinion of the power of Christian love, coming from the heart, speaking through the soft voice, evinced in the whole countenance and manner. He once

energetically remarked—"I believe I could, through love, convert the devil himself." He embarked in a great work; he gave to it his whole mind and heart and strength; he had the genuine martyr spirit, and he died a martyr to his strong sense of duty; nobly did he strive to raise his fallen brother; bravely did he endure hardship on behalf of the souls for whom few men seemed to care. It must not be forgotten, that his was a Domestic Mission in the strict acceptation of the words,—a visitation at the homes of the poor,—his whole idea was involved in this, the friendly unceremonious call, religious conversation, reading the scriptures, prayer, a brotherly interest in the concerns of his humble friends, patiently listening to the story of their wants, ready sympathy in their trials; above all, going to them with the assurance, gathered from his manner more than from any formal announcement, that the poor were not forgotten either by the Father in Heaven, or by their more wealthy human brethren, that all had an equal interest in the blessings of the Christian covenant, that Christ had shed his blood for them, as for the highest, that the Saviour yet travailed in soul; nor would he be satisfied till he had redeemed them from the bondage of corruption. Plenty of work had Tuckerman to do; it grew continually on his hands, so that, at last, he found no time for reading at all, save for a few minutes at breakfast, in his Greek harmony of the Evangelists. Plenty of work has the Domestic Missionary to do. But the work must, as a rule, be its own reward. It has been said that the most useful, and, in some senses, the most elaborate works of a great city are those least seen, under the surface, scarcely thought of,—the drainage so necessary to health and comfort; so, I have sometimes thought, is the missionary field of labour. It is much under ground, can hardly be made generally visible in its results; it is frequently not visible to the workers themselves, they must grope their way as they best can, they must be content to walk mainly by faith, not by sight. Still they must not be weary, they must toil on and hope on, and they cannot fail in the end.

I trust, Sir, you will not consider the above remarks irrelevant to the design of your admirable Magazine. They have been drawn from me by the article to which

they have reference. Recollections of other days have thus forcibly rushed on my mind, and I could not forbear recording them, though their value may be very small.—
Yours most respectfully,

THOMAS BOWRING.

TAMWORTH, *May* 10, 1862.

THE CHURCH OF THE FIRST THREE CENTURIES.*

It is not the least among the manifold advantages of modern enlightenment, that we are thereby placed in a better position to ascertain the real condition of a remote antiquity, than that enjoyed by our predecessors for many ages past. As the glories of ancient Nineveh, buried for thousands of years, have been brought again to the light of day, and made familiar to our eyes; as the history of long-forgotten Egyptian dynasties, unknown for tens of centuries, has been found and read by the patient eye of modern science in the hieroglyphics engraved on the mouldering stone; so it is not too much to affirm, that the condition of the Primitive Christian Church—its history, doctrines, and practice—during the first three centuries of its existence, may be better known to inquirers of the present day, than it could have been to those of any intermediate age, since the time when personal experience necessarily ceased, and authentic traditions concerning it faded away.

In this respect the successive research of scholars and historians during so many hundred years, the accumulated evidence which they have collected, and that very “making of books, of which there is no end,” have given to us a wondrous advantage over former generations; “other men have laboured, and we are entered into their labours.” The difficulty now is rather in selection. Amidst the mass of materials to occupy the mind, where, and with whom shall we begin? By whose authority shall we be

* The Church of the First Three Centuries; or Notices of the Lives and Opinions of some of the Early Fathers, with special reference to the Doctrine of the Trinity; illustrating its Late Origin and Gradual Formation. By Alvan Lamson, D D. Boston: Walker, Wise & Company, 1860.

guided? What facts are most important to be remembered? and what, in comparison, may we suffer to escape?

It seems to us that Dr. Lamson, in his work before us, has conferred on all who desire to be acquainted with the earliest records of our Christian Church, a most important boon in this regard. With the most painstaking and accurate research, and with a wondrous power of condensation, he has collected into one moderately-sized volume the most essential and interesting facts in the history of the period of which he treats; and he has produced, not a musty tome of dry patristic divinity, but an extremely pleasant, as well as valuable book.

This result is mainly attributable to the plan adopted by the author, in never allowing the special theological purpose of his work to interfere with his general delineation of the Primitive Christian Church; *i.e.*, so far as its principal features become manifest in the lives, characters, opinions, practices, and writings of its most distinguished and *representative* men. Dr. Lamson has rightly judged, that the special task which he has assigned himself,—highly important though it be, and of which he never loses sight,—is far from embracing all the interest connected with the history of the early Church; that this interest is manifold in its objects, and is not confined to any sect or denomination of Christians; that even as the Bible itself is free to all, and intended for the good of all, so all have an equal claim to know (as far as can be truly known) what were the doctrines and practice of the Primitive Church, and what the venerable Fathers believed and taught; and, therefore, that he who undertakes to supply such knowledge, more especially in an attractive and popular form, however strong may be his own theological prepossessions, must be actuated by no narrow-minded and sectarian spirit, nor “to party give up what was meant for mankind.”

We purpose, in the first place, to notice the book in its general character, historical and biographical, ere we proceed, in the sequel, to review it in its doctrinal relations to the Trinity and the nature of Christ.

Passing over the alleged writings of the Apostolic Fathers as of doubtful authority, the volume opens with

the Life and Opinions of Justin Martyr, at the beginning of the second century,—“the first of the disciples of the cross of whose writings, after the days of the Apostles, we possess any genuine and undisputed remains.” Seven chapters are devoted to this subject, the first, containing a most interesting account of the life of Justin, chiefly drawn from his own writings; the following chapters being an exposition of his doctrinal views, and an estimate of him as a critic and theologian; while the seventh contains his own account of the Christian rites as administered in his day.

Having described the celebration of the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, in terms which shew how faithfully the simplicity of Gospel precept and Apostolic practice were still adhered to in his time, Justin gives the following account of the services of Sunday:—“On the day called the day of the Sun, all, whether in town or country, assemble in one place, and the Memoirs by the Apostles (the Gospels,) or Writings of the Prophets, are read, as time permits. When the reader has finished, the person presiding instructs the people in an address, and exhorts them to imitate the excellent things they have heard. We then all rise together and pray; after which, as before related, bread and wine are brought” for the Eucharist; which it appears was administered every Lord's Day. He adds, that a collection was then taken, to which they who were wealthy, and chose, contributed according to their ability and disposition: and “what is collected,” he continues, “is deposited with the president, who assists with it orphans and widows, and those who, in consequence of illness or any other cause, are in want; those who are in bonds, and strangers sojourning among us; and, in a word, takes care of all who have need.”

“These,” remarks Dr. Lamson, “are matters of history, and coming, as they do, from a contemporary writer, are of great value. We must recollect, this was just about a century after Christ had left the earth. One would like to look in upon the religious assemblies of Christians as they then existed, could the past, by any possibility, be made to stand before us. Justin speaks not from report of what Christians did in those days; he tells us what passed beneath his own eye.”

He thus concludes his notice of Justin and his opinions. "He was not the first martyr, but he was the first great writer and apologist for Christianity, whose name we meet on the roll of Christian Martyrology. We have given the few incidents which can be gathered from antiquity respecting the life and death of this old witness of the faith. His intellectual traits, and his opinions on various subjects of theology, we learn from his works. He was not, as we have seen, an exact or polished writer; he was not critical; he had not a logical intellect; he wrote in a harsh, rambling, and somewhat impulsive style. He was not wholly free from credulity; indeed, he had a large measure of it: and many of his opinions will now be pronounced extravagant and absurd. But so, in reality, will many of those entertained at the present day appear to a future age. Yet whatever his defects, his merits were very great. We honour his courage, his sincerity, his ardent thirst for truth, his moral elevation, his boldness in defending the cause of Christ, and pleading for the rights of common humanity before thrones,—looking death calmly in the face. . . . It may be cause of gratitude to any of us, if, through God's help, we are enabled to walk as firmly on the way of duty, and be as faithful to our convictions, as was this philosopher and martyr of the early days of the Church."

Our author next conducts his readers from Palestine and Rome, the theatres respectively of Justin Martyr's life and death, "to the land of the Pharaohs—whither 'the young child' Jesus and 'his mother' went,—and to Alexandria its capital;" that great metropolis, then the rival, in magnitude, splendour, and luxury, of imperial Rome herself; the mistress of the East, and first commercial city of the earth.

The time is fifty years after the death of Justin, or about the year 200; "that is, two centuries after the infant Jesus was there. What a revolution had these two centuries brought about!" We are here introduced to Clement of Alexandria, the subject of the second notice, "Like Justin, he was a learned man,—the more scholarly of the two: like him, too, he was born and bred in Heathenism, and was an adept in philosophy before he became a Christian;—his place, Alexandria in

‘Egypt.’ The condition of this city is thus eloquently described—“Alexandria was at this time the seat of learning and refinement, of wealth and luxury, and the centre of the commerce of the world. Here we meet the Jewish, the Oriental, and the Grecian culture, mingled with the old Egyptian superstitions,—all combined in bitter opposition to the religion of the Son of Mary, now grown to be a thing of might and significance. Here had lived and taught the learned Philo. Here was the celebrated school of the later Platonists. Here, too, was the great library of the ancient world, containing, it is said, four hundred thousand volumes. Learning was now passing over to the Christians. Here was their great school of theology. Here now was Clement; and, soon after, the more famous Origen, a prodigy of learning, and a great genius. Here, in the city of Alexander, was now congregated all that was elevated, and all that was vile; all that could command reverence, and all that could inspire disgust,—high dreamy mysticism on the one side, and the coarsest profligacy on the other.” Four chapters are devoted to Clement and his times, treating of a variety of interesting topics, and containing many lively pictures of the society, manners, and customs of the period. The second chapter illustrates his theological views, and those of the Fathers between Justin and himself, especially regarding the nature and position of Christ; but to this subject we shall afterwards have occasion to refer more at length. The next chapter treats of the work of Clement called the “*Pædagogus*,” which, Dr. Lamson says, was meant “to furnish Christians of his time with practical rules for the direction of their conduct in ordinary every-day life. In doing this he is exceedingly minute, and often goes into details which are somewhat offensive to delicacy; and many of his precepts and distinctions are ill-founded or puerile. But many of them are just and discriminating, and must have been found in the highest degree useful to Christians situated as believers then were. . . . Nor are they wholly without interest to us. Taken together the precepts and directions which Clement has left in this work shew in what he (as an enlightened Christian of that age), supposed Christian morality to consist; what was its

extent and its bearing on common life,—a subject on which minds accustomed to liberal inquiries may be supposed to feel some curiosity. And such is the pure religious tone in which, *as a whole*, it is written, and the noble and elevated spirit which breathes through many parts of it, that no one, even at the present day, can read it without benefit to himself, except by a fault of his own." By the "Pædagogus," Clement understands Christ, or the Word. The office of Christ, designated by this term, it seems, is not so much to teach doctrines, as to give precepts of holy living; and the need for Christ, in this relation, is thus beautifully expressed,—“Those who are sick need a Saviour; they who have wandered, a guide; they who are blind, one who shall lead them to the light; they who thirst, the living fountain, of which he who partakes shall thirst no more; the dead need life; the sheep, a shepherd; children, an instructor; all mankind need Jesus.” Our space will not permit us to notice at length the numerous interesting references in the volume to the habits of private and social life among the Alexandrians of that period. It is sufficient to say that it contains many valuable gems, in their antique settings, from the curious collection of this Father’s works,—works, we may observe, which are believed to have been the mine from which some distinguished modern writers have drawn many of their choicest stories.

Clement, amongst other things, treats of food and its uses. We should “eat to live,” he says, and not “live to eat”; . . . “food is not our business, nor pleasure the end; and he draws a picture of the gourmand of his day, and gives a catalogue of the delicacies most prized by him.” From eating, he proceeds to drinking. “The ‘Wine question,’” observes Dr. L., “as it is called, is not new: it seems it was agitated in Clement’s day”; and he then goes on, not by way of argument for or against its use, but simply as a matter of history, to give Clement’s opinion on the subject, which may be here summed up in his own quaint words,—“Wine may be used on two accounts,—for health and relaxation. Wine, drunk in moderation, softens the temper. As life consists of that which is necessary, and that which is useful; wine, which is useful, should be mixed with water, which is necessary.”

He draws a picture of drunkenness, at once, to use his own expressions, "ridiculous, and exciting pity." He compares the body of him who drinks to excess, to a ship absorbed into the abyss of intemperance; while the helmsman, the understanding, is tossed about in the billows, and, dizzy amidst the darkness of the storm, misses the harbour of truth, steers towards that of pleasure, and, striking on sunken rocks, makes miserable shipwreck." The author next brings forward Clement's deliverances regarding various luxuries and extravagances in furniture, dress, demeanour, &c., indulged in by the Alexandrians. "In his food, his dress, his furniture," he says, "a Christian ought to preserve a decent consistency, according to his person, age, pursuits, and the particular occasion. Wealth, ill-directed, is a citadel of wickedness." In another place, "he takes occasion to speak of the proprieties of dress, and particularly female dress; and enters minutely into a description of a lady's toilet. He condemns all extravagance, and a disposition to seek 'the rare and expensive, in preference to that which is at hand, and of low price.' He speaks of the folly of anxiety to adorn the outward form, while the inward adornment is neglected: he dwells on the mischievous consequences of a love of dress, and inveighs against a multitude of female fashions."

"The 'fine gentlemen' of the day are next 'served up.' Among other things which he could not abide, were the attempts made to conceal the effects of age. 'They think,' says he 'that, like snakes, they can cast off old age from their heads, and make themselves young.' For this purpose they were accustomed, it seems, to dye the hair; which Clement thought was absolutely intolerable, because it was in direct contradiction of the Saviour, who said that man could not make one hair of his head white or black! The number of servants maintained by the rich, and the sums expended on dogs, monkeys, birds, &c., are subjects of very grave remonstrance. Altogether the picture he draws of the morals of the day is really appalling," and the rules which he lays down for their reformation,—his precepts of living,—though in some instances they may seem to us trifling and absurd, are, in the main, founded upon, and drawn from, the undying principles of Gospel purity and truth.

We cannot refrain from transcribing in full, in this connection, the very beautiful passage in which Dr. Lamson sums up his opinions regarding this work of Clement, and, generally, as to the Primitive Fathers of the Church. "We may not stop to describe the feelings with which one rises from the perusal of this work (the *Pædagogue*.) They are certainly feelings of reverence for Christianity, which is here presented contending, as an antagonist principle, with deep-seated depravity and sin. In attempting to reform the Alexandrians, Clement had undertaken a Herculean labour; and, notwithstanding the puerility and absurdity of many of his precepts and distinctions, there was a dignity, a consciousness of strength and moral purity, in his bearing a loftiness of aim and earnestness of performance, which must command the respect and admiration of every honest mind, and pleads eloquently for the Christian cause. As writers, the Fathers have been greatly over-rated; the value of their opinions has been exaggerated; but as champions of Christianity, contending manfully and unhesitatingly with the power of the whole Pagan world, the power of the sword, the power of superstition, wit, and ridicule against them; the champions of a pure and inflexible morality in ages of extreme degeneracy and corruption; the defenders of a faith which recognised the principle of human brotherhood as the germ of all social duty, and inculcated a spirit of self-sacrifice and benevolence as constituting the only sure test of discipleship; a faith, under the banner of which they cheerfully met death, and often a death by violence, and left traces of their toil and blood on every soil,—no tribute of veneration we can render them can exceed their merits. To their spirit of noble courage it is to be attributed, under Providence, that Christianity was not crushed in its infancy; through them its blessings have been bequeathed to us; their labours purchased our peace, their sufferings our consolation, their martyrdom our hope; and to turn on them a look of contempt on account of some superstitious weaknesses which belonged to the age, or were the result of their Pagan education, and which, on emerging from the night of Heathen darkness, they had not the strength at once to throw off, argues, we think,—if the effect is not to be ascribed to

want of reflection,—a degree either of illiberality of mind, or of heartlessness, which constitutes no enviable distinction.”

(To be continued.)

C.

THE DAYS OF DARKNESS.

THE aspects of life are as changeable as the appearance of the earth at different seasons or on different days. One season of the year is bright and enlivening—earth reflects the glory of the sky, and sunshine and flower and song of birds rejoice the heart. Another season brings storms and sweeping rains, desolation and decay. One day is bright and genial; every creature in field and grove is glad, and we delight to look abroad on the face of nature; the heart is cheered, and we enter into the mind of the Psalmist when he blesses God for the fair and glorious creation. Another day,—and it may be the very next,—is cold and wet and cheerless, and the heart sympathizes with outward nature and is overclouded with sadness. Just as varying in its aspects is the condition of human life. But it is not that a certain number of the children of humanity see life in one view, and all the rest in a different one; it is not that the life of some flows on in an uninterrupted course of joy and happiness, while that of others is always troubled and agitated. Life, to all, is changeable and uncertain in its character. Those who are now languishing on beds of sickness may easily recall to their mind days and years of health and strength, when every muscle, every sinew, every nerve, performed its functions, and the whole frame was vigorous and active. Those who are now perplexed with cares, and struggling perhaps vainly with adversity, may recall years of peace and contentment, before the cares of the world had traced a furrow on their brow, or awakened one anxious thought in their breast. And those who are mourning for heart treasures which they have lost, and feel their homes desolate, may readily, and in painful contrast, bring up to their minds days when the joys and labours of life were shared by those who have passed away—parent or child, brother or sister—

whose presence gave double zest and pleasure, and whose sympathy lightened tenfold the toils of life. Such is human life; its lights and shadows present themselves wherever man is found, in barbarous or civilized, in heathen or in Christian lands. It is a condition of life, one of its necessary elements. No knowledge attainable by us, no care, no prudence, can secure us against "the days of darkness." By proper attention to the laws of health, we may guard against infirmities of body from which many suffer; but no knowledge of the laws of health, and no care, however vigilant and unceasing, can secure us against all disease and bodily pain. Prudence, economy, and diligence, will do much to guard us against difficulties into which, from want of these virtues, many are plunged; but no caution can secure us, at times, against these reverses of fortune which seem to be unavoidable. And no strength and purity of affection, no depth of piety, no power of wealth, can protect from sickness and death, those who are bound up in our souls, and whose presence gives peace and joy and light to our homes and our hearts.

These—casualties may we in ignorance call them—which so frequently chequer the human lot, and weave so many dark threads in the web of life, are unavoidable; and if so, then we may assume that they are the appointments of God.

We might have expected, as no doubt we have often wished, that no losses, no pains, no bereavements should interfere with life's enjoyment, and that no death should come to remove us from what might thus seem to be a scene of unmingled bliss. God is almighty, all wise, all good. Why did he not thus arrange the condition of life? We frail creatures cannot thus rise up to argue with our Creator; but though we are infinitely removed from him, he has enabled us to understand so much of his dealings as to believe that he did not make us to be wretched, and human life to be a scene of continued suffering and sorrow. Our days and years of happiness—the consciousness of enjoyment drawn from the contemplation of God's works, from partaking of God's bounties, from the intercourse of society and friends, from communion with those whom we love, rises up in opposition

to such a thought. God assuredly has not placed us here to be miserable. Neither, it is evident, has he placed us here to be unceasingly happy. What, then, can be the purpose of this chequered life—its scenes of brightness and its “days of darkness?”

Centuries ago, those who in Eastern lands turned their thoughts to the heavenly bodies which, night after night, shone in the concave sky, observed that most of the stars pursued a fixed course, seeming to rise in the eastern part of the sky, and to move on over the arch of heaven till they set in the western horizon; their course was fixed, and they never deviated from it. But there were observed several stars, larger and brighter than the others, which seemed to follow no fixed course, but to wander hither and thither, sometimes moving eastward and sometimes westward among the other stars, and hence called planets or wanderers. It was not likely that while all the other bodies—the sun, the moon, the stars—had prescribed courses, these brilliant planets should have none: but what was the nature of their motions no one could tell. At length the truth was discovered, that these orbs, like our own earth, revolved at fixed distances round the sun: and now their motions no longer seemed erratic, but in accordance with a fixed law and a definite purpose. That which for so many ages was a mystery became thus plain.

Human life, regarded from the low position in which, when unenlightened by revelation, we stand, seems thus a mystery: it neither indicates that man was made for happiness, nor yet for misery. Scenes the most joyous are followed by scenes the most saddening; events the most auspicious, by calamities the most crushing. We would seem to be poor “wanderers,” now rising on the gale of prosperity, and now sinking under the weight of adversity. The religion of Christ, the Son of God reveals to us a truth which solves the mystery, and unfolds a purpose in this chequered life which vindicates the wisdom and goodness of our Heavenly Father. It is sometimes objected to the Gospel that it deals in mysteries: it has its mysteries we admit. It reveals God to us, but it does not explain to us all his doings. It reveals a future life, but it does not bring us into that spirit land, or give us a history

of its inhabitants, or sketch for us a map of its regions. Yet human life without the Gospel is a mystery painfully perplexing; by the light of the Gospel we may see a beneficent plan and purpose in all the mingled scenes and events, saddening and joyous, that make up its history. The Gospel which distinctly reveals a future life, helps us to see, though it be still imperfectly, a beneficent and righteous purpose in the gloomiest scenes, and the most painful bereavements to which we are here exposed. Raised to the higher point to which a faith in Christ exalts us, we can behold trials the most severe, and partings the most distressing, without feeling that they cast one shadow of darkness over the character of our Heavenly Father. That which, if viewed only within a certain limit, is bewildering, seems, if we extend our view farther, to be reasonable and wise. Contemplate a father in his dealings with his children, limiting your views only to their childhood, and you will be at a loss to reconcile with the love of a parent the privations and pains to which he subjects them, the tears he causes them to shed, and the gratifications which he often denies them. But look further—consider that those children are expected to grow into manhood, and to encounter the temptations, toils, and struggles of life: they must be trained and fitted to meet them; and the child that now blames his father's strictness, and grieves at indulgences denied, may yet, in later life, bless his parent's wisdom, and treasure as a sacred thing the remembrance of his love. And just thus, if we fix our thoughts only on the earthly stage of our existence, we might wonder at pains and sufferings mingling so largely with life's joys; but, if guided by the sublime revelations of the Gospel, we carry our thoughts into the future life, we may easily conjecture how there may be a full and perfect vindication of the goodness of God; and, we doubt not, it will be found that the darkest hours of life's history and the heaviest strokes of calamity are the amplest exhibitions of his love.

Though we “may live many days, and rejoice in them all, yet we should remember the days of darkness, for they shall be many”—trials, partings, sufferings, death—they are the common lot, not an accident that befalls some, but the appointment of God to all. We should seek to meet

them in the spirit of the Christian—calmly, meekly, trustingly. Oh, the power of Christian truth to give light for “the days of darkness,” and to rob death of the victory it seems to have achieved over beauty and affection, worth and wisdom! The storms and rains mingle with the sunshine and calm to bring out the fresh leaves, and the bright flowers, and the swelling buds that now herald the glorious summer: and if in the faith and the spirit of Christ we submit ourselves to the varied discipline to which God in his providence calls us, we shall doubtless find that the development of the soul’s holiest and best affections may be traced as much to the trials as to the pleasures of our earthly being; and if in God’s mercy we may reach to “that land of pure delight, where saints immortal reign,” we may find that to the sorrows which fell most heavily upon our souls, and seemed to overwhelm us with grief, we owe most of the progress we have made heavenward.

BALLYCLARE NON-SUBSCRIBING CONGREGATION.

THIS Congregation continues to be in an unsettled state, and the doors of the Meeting-house are still closed. A brief statement of recent events connected with it, and of its present condition, may not be out of place, especially as paragraphs appear weekly in the local newspapers calculated to give an erroneous impression of the real state of the case.

A considerable time before the disruption of the Presbytery of Antrim, strong dissatisfaction was felt on the part of the leading members of the Ballyclare Congregation with their minister, the Rev. John Hall, and twice they brought the subject before the Presbytery. Among other complaints, it was more than hinted that Mr. Hall’s opinions were of a very latitudinarian character, and that his services, especially on communion seasons, were very unsuitable and unprofitable. There seemed to be, however, no sufficient ground for the Presbytery to interfere; but they suggested that a senior minister, the Rev. W. Bruce, should go to Ballyclare and counsel the people and the minister, hoping that thus confidence and good feeling

might be restored. This reasonable suggestion, in which the Presbytery were unanimous, Mr. Hall did not accede to, declining the proffered counsels of an older and wiser man. When the questions that led to the disruption of the Presbytery came up, Mr. Hall and a portion of his people took one side, the great majority of the Congregation, including nearly all the Committee and Session, took the other. It is easy to see how the breach which had already existed, thus became wider. At a meeting of the Congregation, regularly convened, it was resolved, by a large majority, to leave the Presbytery of Antrim. Mr. Hall, and we believe some of his followers, protested against this resolution. It was after this that the Revds. S. C. Nelson and C. J. M'Alester, with Mr. John Andrews of Comber, visited Ballyclare, for the purpose of examining and endeavouring to arrange the matters in dispute. The Secretary declined to open the Meeting-house to these gentlemen, alleging that the Congregation had left the Presbytery, and no longer acknowledged its jurisdiction.

When the Residuary Presbytery of Antrim met in April, they recommended that a new committee should be chosen from those who adhered to Mr. Hall, without any reference to those who seceded. This advice alarmed the congregation, and, fearing that thus the property which they and their forefathers had mainly contributed to create, might be wrested from them, they resolved to close the gates and not open them till matters were arranged. To prevent Mr. Hall and his adherents from suffering any inconvenience, a leading member of the Congregation, Mr. James Alexander, offered them the use of the Intermediate School, a large and commodious room, for worship and for the Sunday-school. This offer was refused, and Mr. Hall now conducts worship in the open air at the gates of the Meeting-house, while the majority of the Congregation assemble in the Court-house, and are ministered to by members of the Northern Presbytery of Antrim, to which body they are from principle attached. Those who attend Mr. Hall are but a small proportion of the *bona fide* seatholders, the great majority of them being on the other side. The numbers, as far as we can learn, are about *thirty* for him

and *eighty* against him. Of course we do not include among the seatholders on Mr. Hall's side, those who joined from Belfast, or others who, being subordinate members of families, applied for sittings after November 1st.

We have been told that if only *ten* members adhere to Mr. Hall, and remain with the Presbytery of Antrim, they are the Congregation of Ballyclare! A strange doctrine that for those to propound, who are always crying up *the rights of the people!* Mr. Hall wrote to the Secretary of the Congregation, proposing arbitration, for which the others were very willing, but on their writing to him to know the points to be arbitrated on, no reply was given.

We have only to express our sincere hope, that even yet, by some means, the painful disagreement may be arranged, and those unseemly dissensions be healed, which are ruinous to religion in the district, and are matters of deep regret everywhere.

REV. C. J. M'ALESTER AND REV. H. MOORE.

SOME person signing himself "A Member of the Holywood Congregation," has published a letter complaining of the Rev. C. J. M'Alister's conduct in discontinuing an interchange of communion services with the Rev. H. Moore, accusing him of having written to that gentleman an insulting letter, and, at the same time, of having slandered the members of his own congregation. Mr. M'Alester feels, that although these grave but groundless charges are made under the shelter of an anonymous signature, it is due to his own people, and to his friends at Newtownards, that a matter which has been distorted by misrepresentation should be clearly understood. The following are the facts of the case. Mr. M'Alester felt it his duty to draw the attention of the Presbytery of Antrim to painful apprehensions which had arisen in his mind respecting the tendencies of that body, and afterwards to bring before them a resolution to the effect that no person should be licensed or ordained by them who did not acknowledge the Divine Mission of Christ. That resolution, offered in the best spirit for the purpose of satisfying his own mind, and, as he believed, of vindicating the religious character of the Church, was met, not by argument, but by an amendment to the effect *that it be rejected with indignation.* For that amendment Mr. Moore did not merely vote, but expressed himself strongly in support of it. There was nothing left for Mr. M'Alester but to withdraw from a body in which such a resolution was met by such

an amendment. As the time drew on when communion arrangements should be made, it was with extreme regret he felt constrained to interrupt the time-hallowed practice of interchanging services with the Minister of Newtownards; but he felt that only one course was left to him, and accordingly he wrote Mr. Moore the following letter:—

“HOLYWOOD, *April 3, 1862.*

“DEAR SIR,—As the time is at hand for making communion arrangements, I think it only courteous to inform you, that in consequence of recent events of an unpleasant kind in the Presbytery of Antrim, it will be more agreeable to my feelings, and possibly to yours too, that we shall not assist each other. It may be also, that in both congregations there are some to whom, from the same cause, our services would be less acceptable than formerly. My desire was, that while there were conscientious differences among the members of Presbytery on the subjects of discussion, no cause for interruption of good feeling should arise. That it has been otherwise, has been to me a source of deep regret.—Believe me, dear Sir, yours very truly,

“C. J. M'ALESTER.

“Rev. H. Moore.”

That letter surely conveyed no insult to Mr. Moore, and no slander against the Congregation of Holywood. What other minister, having any regard to his religious convictions, would not, in the same circumstances, have acted in the same way?

INTELLIGENCE.

MANCHESTER DISTRICT SUNDAY-SCHOOL ASSOCIATION.

THE Annual Meeting of this Association was held in Bury on Good Friday, and was a most successful and interesting gathering. Not a few teachers walked many miles to be present. The proceedings began with worship, in the beautiful and spacious church of the Bury Unitarian Congregation, and the edifice was filled in every part. The Rev. E. Poynting preached a very appropriate and effective sermon. The assembly then adjourned to dinner, which was served in the Assembly-room of the Bury Athenæum. At two o'clock the business meeting was held in the large school-room in the basement story of the church—John Booth, Esq., President of the Association, in the chair. The report of the Committee for the past year was read by Mr. Dendy, one of the Secretaries. Among other matters, it stated that the time seemed to have arrived for Sunday-schools to assume their true character, and to become places of instruction in religion for the younger members of all classes in the congregation. It also expressed the need of a higher class of teaching and of teachers than could at present usually be secured. It referred to the services of the paid visitor who had spent the past year in inspecting the schools of the district, and stimulating them to increased efficiency. An analysis was also submitted,

showing the average attendance of pupils, and the various institutions connected with the schools. The Rev. R. Gibson, the visitor, then read an interesting report of his labours during the year, and took occasion to refer to the great defect in the instruction conveyed in many schools; and in consequence, the lamentable ignorance that prevailed. He had been told in three or four schools, and that by older scholars, that Moses was an apostle of Jesus Christ; and in more than one, ~~no~~ scholar of the class could give him the name of a single apostle, the title or contents of any one of the Gospels, or any other idea or incident connected with Christ, than that "he was good." He also stated that the want of good and cheap class-books was lamentably apparent in the majority, if not in all their Sunday-schools.

On the motion of the Rev. C. Beard, seconded by Rev. J. C. Street, the Reports were adopted. Resolutions were also passed, of thanks to the preacher; acknowledgment of the zeal and efficiency of Mr. Gibson as visitor; and thanks to the Rev. J. Wright and the Bury Congregation, for their hospitable reception.

A tea meeting was held in the evening—John Grundy, Esq., presided; and in his introductory remarks expressed his belief that to the agency of the Sunday-school might very much be attributed the remarkable patience and trust which the people of their district manifested while passing through a period of depression and suffering which had scarcely ever been paralleled. If the people had remained in ignorance, if no Sunday-school had existed, instead of bearing adversity as now, hunger might have broken out into disorder, and the people been beaten down by the bludgeon of the police, or the arm of the military power.

The Rev. R. H. GIBSON then read a paper on "The means of connecting the Sunday-school with the Christian Church," which was followed by a discussion on its contents, in which the Revs. Dr. Beard, J. Wright, J. C. Street, and Messrs. Dendy, Charlton, and J. M. Wade (representative from the London Sunday-school Society), took part. The Rev. J. Drummond, of Manchester, afterwards addressed the meeting on communion with the spirit of Christ as an essential means of co-operating in the Christian work. Thanks were afterwards voted to the Chairman, and the meeting, which was throughout pervaded by the best spirit, was brought to a close with a hymn and prayer.

UNITARIAN SOCIETY FOR THE DIFFUSION OF CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE.

On Sunday, May 11th, the Annual Sermons on behalf of this Society were preached by the Rev. Samuel Bache, of Birmingham—the morning sermon in the First Meeting-house, and the afternoon sermon in the Second Meeting-house, Rosemary Street. After each sermon a collection was taken up in aid of the funds of the Society.

• ANNUAL MEETING.

The annual meeting of the members and friends of the Society was held on Monday, May 12th, in the First Meeting-house—the Rev. J. Scott Porter in the chair,

The CHAIRMAN having opened the meeting with prayer, said— I beg to return my sincere thanks for the honour you have done me by calling upon me to fill this chair—a chair which has been dignified in former years by being occupied by many illustrious and good men, some of whom are now, we trust, in the enjoyment of the reward of their earthly labours ; others, I rejoice, are still with us, able to take an active part in the business of the Society, dignifying the meeting by their presence, and promoting the Society's usefulness by their counsels. This Society is one in which, since the date of its foundation, I have always taken a deep interest. I am not one of its original founders. At the time it was set on foot I was labouring in another sphere of duty ; but even then I saw the usefulness of which it might be productive, and as soon as I settled in Belfast I gave a large share of my time and attention to its affairs. I have advocated it in the pulpit ; I have collected subscriptions for it from house to house, year after year, until advancing life compelled me to withdraw from that kind of occupation. I have also written tracts for the Society, and for three years I gratuitously conducted a periodical published under its auspices—I mean the *Bible Christian*. Thus, in putting me in the chair, you have called to that post an old and tried friend. I may not at all times have acted judiciously ; but, certainly, the Society never had a warmer friend. I feel honoured by being placed in the chair, because the Society has always laboured to promote Christian freedom, holiness, and truth, in connexion with the great principles that God is one, and that He is love. These are your fundamental principles, and they seem to me to be the fundamental principles of all true religion, and solid, enduring Christianity. I rejoice that the meeting over which I have been called to preside is favoured with the presence of the Rev. Samuel Bache, of Birmingham, who is the minister of, perhaps, one of the most important congregations in the world ; a congregation which, in former days, was the object of bigoted outrage, when its meeting-house was torn down by an infuriated mob, and when its minister, the ever-memorable Joseph Priestley, after his house had been sacked, and his library thrown to the flames, was obliged to fly for his life from the fury of those who, if they had been permitted to execute their bloodthirsty purpose, would have thought they were doing God service. Mr. Bache has shown himself no unworthy successor to those who have gone before him. Under his careful and able ministry, the congregation has prospered in no small degree, and it may be regarded as an outward and visible sign of the success which has attended his labours, and the estimation in which they are held, that his congregation has lately built one of the most splendid temples for the worship of God ever erected by any society of Protestant Dissenters in the United Kingdom. I trust he saw, in the numerous assembly he addressed from this pulpit yesterday, and in the profound attention with which they listened to his discourse, some evidence that the cause which he so ably advocated is dear to many hearts. It is to be regretted that local circumstances have compelled the Committee to fix this meeting at an hour when not one half or one-third of those who would have attended, had it been held in the evening, can possibly be present. The collection yesterday was

larger than in the preceding year, and fully equal to the average of the collections in this place of worship on behalf of this institution. I refrain from stating the amount, as several contributions have not yet been received which are promised. I might say something of the condition and prospects of the Society, but it will come better from the report, which I now call upon the Secretary to read.

The Rev. C. J. M'ALESTER, the Secretary of the Society, then read the Annual Report, which gave a very satisfactory account of the operations of the Society during the past year. It referred to the publication of the *Christian Unitarian*, and the circumstances which led the Committee to issue it, as well as the principles on which they desired to conduct it. It detailed the number of tracts distributed, and the other means which had been adopted to promote the important objects for which the Society had been established. As the report will be printed for circulation, we do not think it necessary to make lengthened extracts from it, but we quote the following passage—as misrepresentations respecting the management of the Depository have gained circulation through the London *Inquirer* and otherwise:—"An opinion has been more than once expressed by those who regard the Society with unfavourable feelings, that its books and tracts are restricted to a very narrow compass, and represent only the views of one small section of the Unitarian Church. That impression is entirely erroneous: the shelves of the Depository represent, in the volumes which they contain, the various shades of opinion which in our free Christian Church are found to exist, and in this respect your Committee believe they would bear comparison with most Book and Tract Societies in the denomination; but it has been their earnest desire not to admit any work which tended to impugn the divine authority of the Christian revelation; and they believe that in this course they have not merely acted in accordance with their own unanimous feelings, but also with the full approbation of the subscribers."

The SECRETARY also read the report of the Ballymena Auxiliary, which was also most satisfactory.

Mr. ANDREWS, the Treasurer, then submitted a statement of accounts.

The Rev. JOHN A. CROZIER, rose to move the adoption of the Report and Statement of Accounts, and, after some introductory remarks, said—Perhaps I should best consult the interest of this meeting, considering the important addresses to which we hope to have the pleasure of listening from several eloquent friends to-day, if I contented myself with merely formally moving this resolution; but still there are one or two matters in connexion with the Report to which I would take the liberty briefly to advert. And, first of all, I believe I am justified in heartily congratulating the Society on its proceedings during the past year, and its present position and prospects. I confess I am most agreeably disappointed in hearing the Report. I had naturally expected that the discouraging controversies, and disturbing influences, that have recently agitated, and are still agitating, the Non-Subscribing Churches in this country, would have had a seriously detrimental effect upon the operations and success of the Unitarian

Society. How pleasant then is it to find that not only have such anticipations not been fulfilled, but that, amidst all its discouragements, your Society seems actually to have increased in zeal and efficiency! As sufficient evidence of this, I would point to what I regard as the most encouraging feature in the Report, that, exclusive of a large and increasing sale of tracts, illustrating the principles of Unitarian Christianity, you have been the means of effecting, during the past year, the gratuitous distribution of upwards of 58,600 of these silent missionaries of our faith through widely separated districts in the North of Ireland, and even in some places in England and Scotland! Sir, this important telling fact speaks for itself. I need scarcely appeal to the universal experience of the ministers of our Church as to the valuable aid afforded them by such tracts in the course of their ministrations. When some of their people, perhaps having little leisure or opportunity for studying large works of theology, come to them for instruction on disputed points of doctrine, on which they are so often required to defend their faith against the attacks of their neighbours of other denominations, it is surely a great thing to be able at once to place in their hands one of these small but powerful instructors, so easily carried, and so easily read. When persons of candid and inquiring minds from other churches, seek from us information as to our religious views, what means are so available, so comprehensive, so convincing to satisfy them, as these admirable tracts! Let me give one instance of their efficiency. A man in humble circumstances, an intelligent linen-weaver, who had been brought up in the strictest sect of Calvinism, lately came to me and told me, that, having lately met with that tract published by your Society, "The Sandy Foundation Shaken," by William Penn, it had effected a complete change in his views, had compelled him to relinquish the doctrines of Calvinism, and embrace those of Unitarian Christianity, which, as he emphatically informed me, he now believed "to be God's truth." He eagerly begged from me more tracts, and has since heartily connected himself with my congregation. I have no doubt that many similar instances will suggest themselves to the recollection of others whom I see here to-day. Now, Sir, I think that these facts ought greatly to console us, for what we freely confess to be our present inability to compete with the extended and successful missionary efforts of our friends in England to spread the principles of Unitarian Christianity in that country. Our time for this has not come; but our faith in God's overruling Providence forbids us to doubt that it will come at last. Meantime, it is well to find that by means of this Society the good seed is being so widely disseminated. One other remark I would make in relation to the Report. It refers to the publication of our periodical, the *Christian Unitarian*. Let us hope that it will be as well supported as we believe it to have been much required. Its prospectus well indicates the position which we occupy, and the important duties that now, more than ever before, are required of us as Unitarians, and as Bible Christians. Sir, we stand midway between two opposite extremes—bound to oppose, on the one hand, the unscriptural doctrines, and human creeds of Calvinistic and Trinitarian Churches, and on the other, the wild,

unregulated, and irreverent speculations, that seem spreading around us, unscriptural in their nature even as the former, and infinitely more mischievous in their infidel tendency. Ours, therefore, is evidently an important position, requiring our most zealous and united efforts worthily to maintain. It is that which has been so well described by a distinguished writer, whose sentiments I am sure will be cordially echoed by this meeting—"There is a middle way of religion, in which, not from weakness, not from indolence, not from halting between two opinions, but from sincere love of Christ, and from desire to conform ourselves to his image, we may humbly aspire to walk."

The Rev. HENRY ALEXANDER (Newry) briefly seconded the resolution, which was put from the chair and passed unanimously.

The Rev. W. BRUCE rose and said, he had much pleasure in moving a vote of thanks to Mr. Bache, who, though in indifferent health, had preached two excellent sermons on behalf of the Society. The first had been spoken of in terms of just praise, and he was sorry that the same persons who had heard the first did not hear the second, which was at least equal, if not superior, to the other, and treated of matters of particular interest to us,—dwelling on the character of St. Paul in eloquent terms, and especially noting the stress which Paul laid on the Divine Authority of Christ, and the necessity of acknowledging this as a fundamental principle of our Christian faith.

Dr. YOUNG, Consul of the United States of America, seconded the motion, and took occasion to refer to the circulation of Unitarian works in the far West of America among other denominations, many of whom he met who expressed to him their approval of the views which those books advocated.

The Rev. SAMUEL BACHE, in acknowledging the compliment, said that he accepted the resolution with very great thankfulness. He considered it a privilege to address such meetings as he had addressed on the previous day, for he felt as deeply as any one could the great importance of doing everything in his power to advance the knowledge of their rational, Scriptural, and eminently practical views of Christianity. There might be Unitarianism apart from Christianity; and it was therefore desirable, in all their proceedings, as he observed was the case, to give a just prominence to their Christianity. He well remembered that the learned and venerable man (the Rev. John Kentish), with whom, during the last twenty years of his ministry and life, he had sustained the relation of junior colleague, never used the word *Unitarian* as a substantive noun: he always said, *Unitarian Christian*. Mr. Bache acknowledged that he used to think Mr. Kentish somewhat formal in adopting this expression, but he had lived long enough now to see that Mr. Kentish was right. Our common Christianity is the main thing, and our Unitarianism should never thrust that aside. Our doctrine is the doctrine of Christ, of his Apostles,—the doctrine contained in the Sacred Records of Divine Revelation,—and should always be set forth in this its authoritative character. We are *Unitarian Christians*. What a hold does this avowal give us on the sympathies of our brethren of other Christian Churches, who, when they find us Christians as they are themselves, receiving the same

Scriptures, acknowledging the authority of Christ as the head of the Church and the Saviour of men fully as much as they themselves do, will insensibly be led to see that all minor differences arising from various interpretations of the revealed Word, are of little consequence in comparison with the essential truths regarding which all Christians cordially agree. In a recent discussion in Birmingham, of religious statistics, a clerical advocate from Liverpool, of the Established Church, is reported to have said, that though the Unitarians are not making any great progress outwardly, their doctrines were leavening the whole Christian world. If such were the case, he (Mr. Bache) was content; for he believed that if such were the case, the time could not be far distant when persons thus affected would be constrained to declare with Peter and John, "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard" (Acts iv. 20). At his own evening-classes for the study of the Bible, he had among the attendants one who had been a local preacher among the Methodists, and very recently two young men educated for that ministry had openly joined the body of Unitarian Christians. Thus the Unitarian Christian Church did not rely on any fictitious aids for its support and advancement. They appealed to the records which all Christians receive as the records of a divine revelation: on these they took their stand, and from these they made their appeal to every man's conscience in the sight of God. He rejoiced that their principles and views were thus being disseminated. "Truth is mighty and must (ultimately) prevail." If his services yesterday had, in the smallest degree, contributed to advance the important interests of moral and religious truth, and its practical influence on the minds and hearts of men, he was fully repaid and highly gratified.

Rev. Dr. MONTGOMERY moved the next resolution:—"That, believing the doctrines of Christian Unitarianism to be those which were taught by our Lord Jesus Christ and His inspired Apostles, and to be most precious for the enlightenment, guidance, comfort, and salvation of mankind, we feel it incumbent on us, amid all difficulties and discouragements, to labour for their maintenance and extension." The resolution which he (Dr. Montgomery) had read was an admirable text for a discourse. The subject embraced so many parts that it was difficult for him to speak to any one of them as it ought to be spoken to. They received the doctrines of Christian Unitarianism as those which were taught by the Saviour and His inspired followers. It was on this ground alone they received them. They had no other authority in their Church than the Great King and Head of the Church. Their Christian Unitarianism was so plain and simple that a child could find it in the Scriptures. It was now exactly thirty-five years since, at a meeting of the General Synod of Ulster, in Strabane, their Calvinistic brethren had extreme difficulty to find words in which to declare themselves Trinitarians. In what manner they were to do so they could not tell. Three or four committees were appointed to draw out a formula. No two of them concurred, and he (Dr. Montgomery) recollected the father of their worthy chairman rising and saying, that he could express his opinion on the question a hundred times over from the words of Holy Writ. Finally, they did agree

to the words as in their Shorter Catechism, that "There are three persons in the Godhead—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory." Even upon this answer they disputed afterwards—one said he could not understand the substance of a spirit; another said equality destroyed identity; and the late Dr. Stewart said it was as intelligible to his mind as high Dutch, which he did not understand. Compared with this, the Unitarian doctrines were such, that he that runs might read them. He never knew a man who denied the simple unity of Almighty God; and, if he discoursed with many of his brethren of the Calvinistic body, he found that they did not hold the doctrines in the Calvinistic creed any more than he did himself. As the resolution stated, they considered their doctrines precious for enlightenment. If they were the doctrines of Christ—if they were the doctrines of truth and righteousness—they must tend to the enlightenment and salvation of man. Their doctrines, which were pre-eminently moral doctrines, were the very doctrines calculated to prepare man for the society of the just made perfect. Was it not, therefore, natural, that they should labour for the extension of these doctrines? Believing that they were well fitted for the moral and intellectual improvement of man, they would be unworthy of the name of Christians if they did not labour to extend them. The resolution stated that they had to do so amid difficulties. Of course they had. Even the truths of science had to contend with difficulties, and the development of the true system of the universe brought Galileo to a prison, and nearly to a grave. They need not, therefore, be discouraged because of difficulties. Christianity, in its purity, had many opponents on the ground of that purity, which made it most worthy of their acceptance. They found the principal churches of the world bidding for popularity against each other, each offering the most convenient way of going to Heaven, that the greatest rewards are to be had for the smallest service, and in some cases services were not required at all. Works, it was thought, were not necessary to find favour with God—that they were merely an evidence of belief. They spoke of discouragements. The Saviour himself was eminently discouraged. He came to his own and his own received him not. He was so discouraged that he was brought to a painful and ignominious death, but that was made the means of sealing the salvation of the world. He did not deny the right of private judgment to any man. He knew not how he could live in society for a single day if he was determined to have everything his own way. This was true Christian politics—esteeming one another in love; but, when men contended for their own narrow prejudices, they rarely brought others to a belief in their principles. Considering the circumstances by which men were surrounded, their views were generally formed for them, not by them; and they had a thousand times more comfort in believing that the Calvinist would be saved than the Calvinist could possibly have in believing that the Unitarian would be damned. It would be absurdly ridiculous to condemn a man for holding different opinions; but, what he did condemn was, that men should hold one set of views and profess another. He had a very short time to re-

main in this world in the course of nature. He had lived amid stormy scenes, and he had learned this lesson, that the greater the discouragement, the stronger was the nerve to overcome it. There was an admirable maxim in Scotland—"Set a stout heart to a stae brae." Acting on this principle, let them do what was right. Leave events in the hands of a controlling power, and keep the conscience void of offence to God and man.

The Rev. W. CROZIER (Rademon) seconded the resolution, and stated that the people of two opinions, to whom Dr. Montgomery had referred, were better away from their body altogether. He alluded to the difficulties which had lately arisen within their own bounds, and expressed his firm belief that the agitation which had prevailed would do good : it would purify the religious atmosphere. If there have been those in any way associated with us who see no Divine authority in the doctrines of the Gospel, it is right that we should disavow any participation in their views, and he considered that the recent discussions, painful though in some respects they had been, would render their Church more firm in its principles.

Dr. BLAIN moved the next resolution—"That we rejoice in the establishment of the *Christian Unitarian*, as a periodical in connexion with this Society intended to vindicate principles which this Society has always held dear, while defending the sacred cause of religious freedom, holiness, and truth, and endeavouring to advance the social, moral, and intellectual progress of our race : that we feel grateful to the Rev. Charles James M'Alester for undertaking the responsible duties of editor, and cordially wish him success in the object of his labours."

Mr. A. O'D. TAYLOR seconded the motion. He could bear his humble testimony to the unvarying zeal, great ability, and good temper with which Mr. M'Alester had hitherto performed his duties, and he hoped Mr. M'Alester might be spared a great many years to labour in the same field.

Mr. KENNEDY moved the next resolution, conveying the warmest thanks of the Society to the Rev. C. J. M'Alester and Michael Andrews, Esq., Secretary and Treasurer, for the very able and assiduous manner in which they discharged their duties during the past and former years, and for their unremitting exertions to promote the usefulness of the Society, and that they be requested to continue in office for the ensuing year.

The motion was carried by acclamation.

Mr. M'ALESTER said, he felt gratified by the expression of approbation and confidence conveyed in the resolution just passed. It had always been a great object with him to promote, as far as he could, the principles of their Society, and to do any thing in his power to increase its usefulness. He had seen some unjust and severe criticisms on the Society, in one of the leading organs of their body, and he was therefore led to apprehend that their meeting would not have been characterized by the unanimity which had prevailed. It was particularly painful for one who held the office of a Christian pastor, and who was thus continually called on to minister to others the truths and consolations of the Gospel, to have his mind harrassed with strife and rumours of strife. He trusted that their time of quarrelling was past. If there were some who

thought that the principles which the Society was organized to represent are too restricted, and that their basis should be broader than Christian Unitarianism, they must feel that the vast majority of its members did not agree with them, and that it would be more considerate and more Christian for them to develope in some other sphere their favourite views. He saw lately in the London *Inquirer*, a paragraph extracted from the *Boston Christian Register*, in which it was stated that the *Christian Unitarian* was "the organ of the intolerant party in Belfast." If it be intolerance for Christians to oppose those who would drag down their divine faith to the level of mere Deism, then he confessed they were an intolerant party, and the *Christian Unitarian* was the organ of that intolerant party, and he was proud to be the editor of this intolerant Magazine. But the *Register*, unless it have greatly changed of late, advocates the very same principles for which they contend, and in condemning them, it was condemning itself, and condemning, too, the principles of those whose memory it most delights to honour—Channing and Ware. He believed, however, that the *Register* has been misled by its London contemporary, and had unconsciously done them injustice. He was lately surprised to find a correspondent of the *Inquirer* arguing that our blessed Lord may have been under a mistake in some matters, and that he was not infallible in all his teachings. Although some might denounce them for opposing some of the extravagant and "advanced" views which were now propounded under the name of Unitarianism, he trusted they would be unanimous in adhering to the great principles embodied in the rules of the Society, and amid good report and bad report, do what they could to maintain and extend their Christian faith.

Mr. ANDREWS, in returning thanks, said he was not a good speaker. He endorsed what Mr. M'Alester had said; and, if God spared him for another year, his services were at the command of the Society.

A Committee for the ensuing year was then balloted for.

The Rev. J. Scott Porter having left the chair, and the Rev. Henry Alexander having been called thereto, a vote of thanks was passed to the chairman for his conduct in the chair.

Rev. J. SCOTT PORTER said Mr. Bache had been among the beasts at Ephesus; he had been in a conclave of Cardinals; he had been in the star-chamber of inquisitors—among bigoted persons, noted for their intolerance, and it would be a wonder if he got away safe. (Laughter). He believed that Mr. Bache would be able to give a true account of the bigotry, intolerance, and malignity of those he had addressed on the previous day, and on that occasion.

The CHAIRMAN pronounced the benediction, and the meeting separated.

BICENTENARY CELEBRATIONS.

The present year is the Bicentenary of the Act of Uniformity, which took effect in England at the Feast of Saint Bartholomew, August 24th, 1662. The English Dissenters of different denominations are seeking in various ways to honour it with a suitable cele-

bration, as by the erection of chapels and public halls, by the repairing of venerable meeting-houses that had fallen into decay, by subscriptions to aid the cause of Nonconformity, by the delivery of lectures and by the publication of the writings of the most illustrious Nonconformist ministers of that memorable period. At present a course of lectures bearing on the event is being delivered in London by several of the principal Unitarian ministers of the metropolis, while in the leading towns of England similar lectures are advertised by Unitarian and other Dissenting clergymen. The first article in our present number, from the pen of an able contributor, will be followed by others explaining the most memorable events associated with the Feast of Saint Bartholomew.

APPROPRIATE MEMORIAL TO THE REV. GEORGE HARRIS.

The Newcastle Congregation, of which, during the last years of his life, the Rev. George Harris was the able and valued minister, has resolved to commemorate the Bicentenary of the Act of Uniformity by erecting a memorial window, which may at the same time exhibit their reverence for the principles of Nonconformity, and do honour to the memory of one of the most eloquent advocates of religious freedom. We are sure that the many admirers of Mr. Harris will gladly aid the brethren in Newcastle to render the memorial window worthy of the cause, and of the man it is designed to honour.

GREYABBEY CONGREGATION.—We understand that the Congregation of Greyabbey resolved, on Sunday the 18th ult., to separate from the Remonstrant Synod, and join the Presbytery of Antrim. We have learned no particulars of the meeting at which this resolution was adopted, but if the Congregation have imbibed the *free* principles embodied in the late circular of their minister, such a step was naturally to be expected.

OBITUARY.

At Martello Terrace, Holywood, on May 14th, William Gamble, Esq., aged 38 years.

At Castlereagh, on May 22nd, Jane, daughter of the late Mr. Gawn Orr.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Communications for the Editor, to be addressed by post to Rev. C. J. M'Alester, Holywood; or, otherwise, to 28, Arthur Street, Belfast.

Orders for the work and business communications to be sent to the Agent of the Society, 28, Arthur Street.

THE
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[No. 6.

THE EXPULSION OF THE PRESBYTERIANS FROM
THE CHURCH IN IRELAND.

THE Act of Uniformity (2 Elizabeth)-which established the protestant religion in Ireland, was far less stringent in its terms of ministerial communion than the statute which was enacted under a similar title in the reign of King Charles II. It required no declaration of "assent and consent" to the Book of Common Prayer; it enjoined no subscription to "Articles of Religion;" indeed, for fifty-five years after the passing of the Act, there were in Ireland no articles to subscribe.* It required no oath of obedience to "Canons Ecclesiastical," nor could it, for the first book of Irish canons was not enacted till seventy-six years afterwards.† In short, the ritual of the Church of England was established as the only tolerated form of public worship, but it was simply made obligatory *by law*. If any clergyman failed in conformity, he was liable to be punished, *if prosecuted to conviction*; but, if not prosecuted, he was safe. He violated no oath, he broke no engagement. There was in Ireland, at that time, no inclination to enforce the observance of the rubric too rigorously. Most of the protestants in this country were inclined to puritanism. Almost all were unwilling to weaken the protestant interest by unnecessary schisms on minor matters. The puritan clergy, who were, almost

* The *Articles of Religion agreed upon by the Archbishops and Bishops and the rest of the Clergy of Ireland*, were adopted in Convocation at Dublin, in the year 1715, and may be seen at full length in Neal's *History of the Puritans*, Vol. v., Appendix, pp. xxxiv.—lii. Even then there was no declaration of adherence to them demanded.

† The Irish Canons, which are chiefly copied from the English Canons of 1603, and like them, were never sanctioned by Parliament, were adopted by Convocation in the year 1631. They require conformity in vestments, ceremonies, &c., and enjoin subscription, declaration of assent and consent, &c.

to a man, of presbyterian principles, were, in general, pious and learned, exemplary in their lives, and zealous in enforcing and upholding the doctrines of the Reformation. It would have been a scandal to oppress and harass them for non-conformity in things indifferent, and that in the presence, and to the delight, of "the common enemy," who was still active and powerful. Besides, in not a few parishes, the choice which both patrons and prelates had to make, in those early times, was between non-conforming ministers and none; or sometimes between non-conforming ministers and ministers who were worse than none. Hence, puritanical clergymen were freely inducted into the livings to which they were presented, and seldom were molested by the ecclesiastical courts, even when their disuse of the Service-Book and the ceremonies which it prescribed, was notorious.

The measures adopted in the reign of King James I. tended to increase the number of such ministers. His efforts to force episcopacy upon the presbyterian clergy and people of Scotland, by means of penal severities, made many conscientious men anxious to escape to some land where they might enjoy freedom of worship; and the plantation of Ulster, begun in the year 1605, opened up the refuge of which they were in quest. Vast multitudes of Scottish presbyterians emigrated to Ireland, whose descendents still form the bulk of the population in the counties of Down, Antrim, Armagh, Tyrone, and Derry; and are widely scattered over other parts of the kingdom. Among these settlers were some presbyterian ministers, men of eminent abilities and devotedness, whose names are, to this day, held in respectful memory. The patrons of parishes were glad to gain these clergymen as incumbents for livings which were, or became, vacant on their estates; and the bishops of the Church of Ireland were not only willing, but eager, to grant them ordination and institution in such forms as did not interfere with their conscientious scruples.* A very large proportion

* See the accounts of their respective institutions, given by Blair and Livingstone, in their autobiographies, which are faithfully copied by Dr Reid, *History of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland*, Vol. i., pp. 103, 4 and 116—8. The Bishops Echlin of Down and Connor, and Knox of Raphoe, appear to have avoided everything that could displease the candidates.

of the parochial clergy throughout the province of Ulster were non-conformists and presbyterians. They ministered in the churches; they enjoyed the glebes, tithes, and other incomes belonging to their benefices: but they celebrated divine worship, and administered the ordinances of religion, not according to the forms prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer, but those which they themselves approved—those, namely, which are characteristic of presbyterianism.

But in the reign of King Charles I. an opposite policy was pursued. Influenced by his own narrow-minded bigotry, and urged forward by his favourite counsellors, Laud and Strafford, that infatuated monarch endeavoured to bring the people of his three kingdoms to a perfect uniformity of faith and worship, and to as close an approach to the Romish doctrine and ritual as might be consistent with the bare profession of protestantism. Hence new and stricter laws against non-conformists were passed, and the older ones were more rigidly enforced; several of the non-conforming clergy,—especially the Scottish ministers,—were deprived, and some were imprisoned and fined. A number of them attempted, though unsuccessfully, to escape to the American plantations from the cruelties of Strafford, as they had at first fled to Ireland to avoid the persecutions of Spotiswood and Cameron.* But the power of their adversary was short-lived. The Irish insurrection of 1641, while it led to other consequences, which neither its authors nor its opponents foresaw, had the effect of uniting, for a time, all protestants in Ireland, in endeavours to resist a foe who threatened the destruction of them all, without distinction. An army was despatched from Scotland to protect the inhabitants of Ulster; its principal commanders were presbyterians; its ranks were filled, almost exclusively, with soldiers of that persuasion. Each regiment had its presbyterian chaplain, and was organised ecclesiastically on the model of a presbyterian Church.

* In Livingstone's *Life* there is a very interesting account of this attempt. (See also Reid's *History*, Vol i., pp. 201—4.) About one hundred and forty ministers, gentlemen, and others,—Blair and Livingstone among the number,—embarked for New England, but after accomplishing more than half the distance to America they were driven back by a storm.

It was by ministers and elders belonging to this army that the first Presbytery which ever sat in Ireland was erected. It met at Carrickfergus on the 10th of June, 1642. Under the circumstances of the time it was right, and indeed necessary, that the Presbytery should take energetic means for supplying the churches in its neighbourhood with pastors. Many of the former ministers had been slain at the first outbreak of the insurrection: others had fled to England, or elsewhere, with the intention of never returning; several parishes had been vacant for years. All the bishops of the province of Ulster, without exception, were either absent or dead. The members of the Presbytery would have been faithless to the duty which devolved upon them, if they had not endeavoured to procure for the people of Ulster,—thus abandoned to their oversight,—the ministration of the word and ordinances of the Gospel. Accordingly they “planted” many churches throughout the province; that is, they settled, or ordained in them, ministers, freely chosen by the people themselves to be their pastors. Of course such settlements or ordinations were conducted under presbyterian forms. In this way a very great addition was made to the number of the presbyterian ministers who were placed in Ireland. It may not be easy to determine their exact number; but it is certain that they amounted to no less than seventy in the province of Ulster alone,—a large number, considering the scattered population of the country in that unsettled time.

The Irish insurrection was put down, and its last embers trodden out by Cromwell, who settled the government in the hands of his own officers. But the presbyterians adhered to their allegiance to the king, and to the free constitution of the realm. They frequently bore their testimony against the evil counsellors by whom King Charles I. had been led into those tyrannical measures by which he violated his most solemn engagements, sought to destroy the liberties of the nation, and in the end forfeited his own life: but they were equally zealous in protesting against the military despotism which succeeded; and in declaring for the rights of his son, King Charles II., then an exile in a foreign land. For this they often suffered severely at the hands of Coote and the other gover-

nors appointed by the ruling powers: but nothing could shake them in their loyalty to him whom they regarded as their rightful king. No efforts were more strenuous than those which they made to procure his restoration to the throne of his ancestors: nor were any congratulations more sincere than those with which they hailed that event. But never were hopes more signally disappointed than those which they had cherished, of enjoying peace, protection, and freedom of conscience, if not favour, under his government.

While the negociations were in progress which led to the restoration of the young monarch, he issued a manifesto from Breda, the place of his residence, in which he promised "a liberty to tender consciences; and that no man should be disquieted or called in question for differences of opinion in matters of religion which did not disturb the peace of the kingdom." How shamefully these promises were violated, as soon as the maker of them was firmly seated on the throne, is known to every reader of history.

As respects the presbyterians of Ireland, it was violated almost as soon as it was uttered. The restoration took place in the last week of May, 1660. In less than a year, the bishops of Ulster,—some of them the old occupants of the sees,—others recently appointed,—all furnished with instructions to exercise the full rigour of ecclesiastical law against non-conformists,—were despatched to their several dioceses: and they came, determined to do their cruel work. It is melancholy to find the first example of unrelenting severity set by Jeremy Taylor, the newly-consecrated Bishop of Down and Connor. In the month of April, 1661, he held a visitation in the town of Lisnagarvy, now called Lisburn. Finding, from a conference with the leading presbyterian ministers in his diocese, that they could not be brought to consent to be re-ordained by the imposition of episcopal hands,—which seemed to them to imply the invalidity of their former ministrations, and a condemnation of all the foreign protestant churches;—that they would not pledge themselves to an exact observance of the Book of Common Prayer,—which appeared to them too high an honour to be paid to any human composition;—that they scrupled

the use of the vestments, and of certain ceremonies, such as bowing at the name of Jesus, and the sign of the cross in baptism,—which they looked on as unscriptural impositions,—he first tried to gain some of them by promises of favour; and not succeeding in the attempt, “he did in one day, in his visitation, *declare thirty-six churches vacant!* He did not make any process against the ministers, nor suspend, nor excommunicate; but he simply held them not for ministers, they not being ordained by bishops. Therefore he only declared the parishes vacant which he was to supply, himself having immediately the charge of all the souls in his diocese, as he professed; and procured priests and curates for these parishes as he thought fit. The rest of the brethren in other dioceses were dealt with in the same manner in the end, though not with so great heat and violence.”*

In this manner were *sixty-one* excellent and worthy ministers† deprived of their livings, expelled from the

* These are the words of the Rev. Patrick Adair, who was himself one of the sufferers by Bishop Taylor's procedure. He was incumbent of Cairncastle, to which living he had been appointed in the year 1646; and, after his ejection from the Established Church, he became minister of the Presbyterian Congregation of Belfast. Mr. Adair has left a valuable *History of the Settlement and Progress of Presbyterianism in Ulster*, of which a copy exists in manuscript in the possession of his successor, the Rev. William Bruce of Belfast. It well deserves to see the light, and it is to be hoped will be given to the press. For a character of Mr. Adair, see Kirkpatrick's *Loyalty of the Presbyterians*, pp. 165, 166.

† The following list of these venerable confessors is copied from Dr. Reid's *History of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland*, Vol. ii., p. 351: who says it is “extracted from Wodrow, (i. 324, 5.) with some few corrections, and with the addition of the places where they officiated, so far as I have been able to discover them after many years' laborious research.” Its general accuracy may be fully relied on; although, from the nature of the case, it is possible that some names may be omitted. An asterisk prefixed to a name, denotes that the person survived the revolution.

PRESBYTERY OF DOWN.—Andrew Stewart, *Donaghadee*; Gilbert Ramsay, *Bangor*; John Greg, *Newtownards*; John Drysdale, *Portaferry*; John Gordon, *Comber*; Thomas Peebles, *Dundonald*; *Hugh Wilson, *Castlereagh*; *Michael Bruce, *Killinchy*; William Richardson, *Killileagh*; John Fleming, *Downpatrick*; *Alexander Hutchinson, *Saintfield*; *Henry Livingston, *Drumbo*; Henry Hunter, *Dromore*; James Campbell, *Rathfryland* (?) Andrew M'Cormick, *Magherally*.

PRESBYTERY OF ANTRIM.—William Keyes, *Belfast*; James Shaw, *Carnmoney*; *Robert Cunningham, *Broadisland*; *Thomas Hall, *Larne*; *Patrick Adair, *Cairncastle*; James Fleming, *Glenarm*; Gilbert Simpson, *Ballyclare*; *Anthony Kennedy, *Templepatrick*; Thomas Crawford, *Donegore*; Robert Hamilton, *Killead*; Robert

houses which their parishes had built for their residence, and cast adrift, to find as they could—many of them in advanced age—a maintenance for their families and for themselves, at a time when their principles were loaded with odium, and their characters were by many held up to contempt, and, when every person in place, and every candidate for preferment, well knew that there was no shorter or surer way to the favour of those who wielded the power and dispensed the patronage of the State, than by heaping ridicule, reproach and wrong, upon these devoted servants of God, and upon all who adhered to their cause, or in any way lent them encouragement or countenance. It would be tedious to recount the manifold acts of injustice to which these conscientious men were exposed. They were, in fact, considered as almost beyond the pale of law. Upon the slightest pretext, sometimes without even the shadow of a pretext, they were treated as conspirators against the State. They were apprehended, dragged to jail, and subjected to tedious imprisonments without trial and without proof.* The

Dewart, *Connor*; John Shaw, *Ahoghill*; James Cunningham, *Antrim*; John Cathcart, *Randalstown*.

PRESBYTERY OF ROUTE.—David Buttle, *Ballymena*; William Cumming, *Kiltraughts* (?) John Douglass, *Broughshane*; Robert Hoghead, *Ballyrashane*; Gabriel Cornwall, *Ballywillan* (?) Thomas Fulton, *Macosquin* (?) *William Crooks, *Ballykelly*; *Thomas Boyd, *Aghadoey*; James Kerr, *Ballymoney*; John Shaw, *Garvagh*.

PRESBYTERY OF TYRONE.—Robert Auld, *Maghera* (?) Archibald Hamilton, *Donaghendry*; George Keith, *Dungannon* (?) *Thomas Kennedy, *Donaghmore*; Thomas Girvan, *Glasslough*; *John Abernethy, *Minterburn*; *Alexander Osborne, *Brigh*; James Johnston, *Lisnaskea* (?)

PRESBYTERY OF LAGAN.—*Robert Wilson, *Strabane*; William Moorcroft, *Newtownstewart*; John Wool, *Clondermot*; William Semple, *Letterkenny*; John Hart, *Taughboyne*; John Adamson, *Omagh* (?) John Crookshanks, *Raphoe*; Thomas Drummond, *Ramelton*; *Robert Craighead, *Donoughmore*; Hugh Cunningham, *Ray*; Hugh Peebles, *Lifford* (?) Adam White, *Fannet*; William Jack, *Bull-alley, Dublin*.

It is remarkable that of all the presbyterian clergy who were then settled in the Irish church, *only seven* conformed.

* Several instances of the wanton oppression and injustice inflicted upon the ejected ministers are detailed in Dr. Kirkpatrick's *Historical Essay on the Loyalty of Presbyterians*, pp. 325—385, but lamely and imperfectly; and, strange as it may seem, this writer takes no notice whatever of the fact that the ministers were ejected from their livings! nor of their being utterly silenced from preaching, even in their own houses, to such persons as might resort to them. The best account of those times is in Reid's *History of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland* Vol. ii., pp. 325—426.

jails of those days were horrible abodes for persons accustomed to the decencies or proprieties of civilized life. Some worthy ministers died of pestilent diseases caught in those dens of filth and misery; others endured, till their dying day, the effects of such imprisonment in their shattered constitution and ruined health.

But the injury which they felt most keenly was the interruption of their ministry. They loved their ministry; they looked upon it as a holy work to which they had been called of God and solemnly set apart, and it was a work to which they had consecrated all their powers. They loved their flocks, who had invited them to labour among them in the word and doctrine,—who had rewarded their efforts with grateful respect, and now clung to them with affectionate attachment. It was to them a cruel deprivation to be prohibited from holding forth to their beloved people the word of life, or from leading their devotions in solemn address to Him from whom alone they could now look for succour. To be thus silenced was more than they could endure. They were determined not to be silent. In various ways they still continued the exercise of their ministry. Most of them preferred doing so in such a quiet and unobtrusive manner as did not attract the attention of persons in power, or draw down upon their flocks the vengeance of their enemies. In private dwellings, chiefly at night, and at times when it was known that their persecutors were otherwise occupied, they held meetings with the members of their former congregations, for prayer, for exhortation, and for mutual encouragement. Their ministrations were abundantly blessed. Who, indeed, could fail to be impressed by holy counsels, offered by men who spoke to them as it were “with a rope round their necks?” But oftentimes were the emissaries of the bishops on their track; and fines, imprisonments and banishments were the consequences of their efforts to advance the kingdom and the glory of God. As was to be expected, the ministers were the persons on whom these visitations chiefly fell. But the faithful members of their congregations did not altogether escape. The law was impartial in its denunciation, and its penalties were oftentimes

impartially inflicted on the pastors and the flocks. "The tender mercies" of these persecutors "were cruel."

In the histories of these times, the reader's sympathies are frequently and warmly solicited on behalf of the Two Thousand ministers who were ejected from their livings in England by the Act of Uniformity passed in 1662: and it is true that their characters, their sufferings, and their fortitude are well calculated to awaken respect and admiration, and deep sympathy. But in some respects, the ministers ejected in the previous year from the church in Ireland are even more deserving of our compassion and admiration. The English confessors had the example of their brethren in Ireland to point out to them the course of duty, and to animate them, if, for a moment, they faltered in their determination to pursue it: the Irish non-conformists, as they were the first who were put to the fiery trial of their faith, had no such motive to sustain them. The English ministers who were ejected, lived among a wealthy and a generous people, in a state of society where learning and talents such as they possessed might be expected to secure for their owners competence, if not affluence, in other walks of life; and these gifts would undoubtedly have done so, in most cases, had not new laws been subsequently enacted, which cut them off from this resource: but their Irish fellow-sufferers lived among a poor population, in a rude and almost barbarous province, recently distracted and almost utterly ruined by the most horrible civil war that the world had ever witnessed, and where such means of support were altogether unattainable. The two thousand in England occupied a prominent position: their wrongs and their fortitude were displayed on a public theatre, where they attracted the gaze even of foreign nations, and where they were certain to command reverence, and to secure the sympathy of millions: the sixty or seventy in Ulster, who sacrificed all to conscience, lived in an obscure and remote region, where it was hardly to be expected that the story of their fidelity and their sufferings would become known beyond their own religious circle. The English non-conformists were a powerful party in the state. The Parliament which prepared the way the King's recall consisted almost exclusively of non-conformists:

the convention which actually recalled him was, at first, largely under non-conformist influences: they might reasonably hope to see the day when unjust legislation would be reversed, and they should be restored to the offices from which they were now cast out. But the Irish presbyterians could indulge no such expectation. They were a feeble minority in the kingdom: abhorred by each party which had in turn grasped the reins of power. Republicans and royalists, episcopalians and Romanists, had equally made them the objects of a serious crusade. Lastly, the English presbyterians could not but feel that they had drawn down upon themselves the vindictive feelings of the opponents, by whom they were now made to suffer. In their day of greatness, while episcopacy was prostrate before them, they had shewn little mercy; they had ejected many episcopalians from their livings; many of their leading clergy had often and loudly expressed their regret that they were not permitted to carry out their persecuting principles, even to the length of exterminating all who rejected what they considered as fundamental doctrines. But the Irish presbyterians, never having been in the possession of political power, had been saved from this sad temptation, and certainly had not provoked their calamity by cruelties of their own.

Were, then, their political principles enlarged, liberal, and wise? No. It is to be feared if they had been placed in authority they would have manifested a very intolerant spirit. Their political principles were narrow, and their religious views were, in our opinion, unenlightened. But they were sincere and honest men; faithful servants of God according to their light; followers of Christ; prepared like him to encounter distress, reproach, and death, for conscience' sake; to take up the cross and bear it even to Golgotha. Honour to their names and memories! How ought the example of their fidelity and fortitude to animate those who, under circumstances of far less danger, yet amidst discouragements and difficulties, are labouring to promote the reign of righteousness and truth and peace on earth! How ought it to rebuke the cowardice and selfishness of many in modern times, whom we see clinging to the offices and

emoluments of an establishment whose doctrines they disbelieve, and are doing their utmost to subvert! It is to be hoped that the attention which will be drawn to the self-sacrificing truthfulness of the noble army of confessors of 1662, in England, will awaken some of these recreants to a sense of their duty to themselves, to conscience, honour, God and man, of which many among them seem to be lamentably forgetful.

The heroism of the ejected ministers, both in England and in Ireland has not been without its fruits. In a corrupt, profligate, and unprincipled age, they gave a living proof, of which the world stood sadly in need, of the reality of religious conviction, and of its power to animate, to sustain, to console. Their conduct touched even the hearts of their persecutors; all, except the more bigoted members of the prelatical hierarchy. When the government,—partly no doubt to secure its own purpose,—that of benefiting Catholicism,—relaxed the execution of the penal laws against *all* Dissenters,—the presbyterians came in for a share of the benefit,—and the impression which had been produced by their faithfulness and truth was distinctly seen. As soon as they had rest from persecution, and they were allowed to assemble in congregations, their numbers multiplied rapidly. Meeting-houses arose in every quarter; pastors were ordained; presbyteries and synods were established; and the presbyterian denomination, though generally abandoned by the nobility and gentry who had formerly belonged to it, was found to embrace the great bulk of the commercial, the manufacturing, and the agricultural population in the province of Ulster. Since the glorious revolution of 1688, their liberties have been enlarged and extended. Their principles of ecclesiastical polity have spread into other quarters of the kingdom, and their bitterest enemies will admit that wherever these principles have taken root, no matter with what form of religious doctrine they may be connected, order, industry, and education have followed in their train. It is not too much to assert, that for a large proportion of whatever freedom, political or religious, now exists upon earth, the world is, under the providence of God, mainly indebted to the puritans and other non-conformists of the 17th

century, in the three kingdoms now united under the crown of Great Britain. It is equally true, that among their posterity and successors we find the noblest examples of freedom, independence, and conscientiousness in the pursuit of religious truth.

M O R N I N G .

IN the morning I will raise
To my God the voice of praise,
With his kind protection blest,
Sweet and deep has been my rest.

IN the morning I will pray
For his blessing on the day ;
What this day shall be my lot,
Light or darkness, know I not.

Should it be with clouds o'ercast,
Clouds of sorrow, gathering fast,
Thou who givest light divine,
Shine within me, Lord, oh shine !

Show me, if I tempted be,
How to find all strength in Thee,
And a perfect triumph win
Over every bosom sin.

Keep my feet from secret snares,
Keep my eyes, O God, from tears,
Every step thy grace attend,
And my soul from death defend !

Then, when fall the shades of night,
All within shall still be light,
Thou wilt peace around diffuse,
Gently as the evening dews.

W. H. FURNESS.

HUMANITARIANISM.

CHRISTIANS of the various new schools now at work, are unwilling to be troubled with *particular passages* of Scripture, and would greatly prefer an appeal to the *general* tone of its writers, respecting any subject specially under discussion. Let us try the Humanitarian scheme by this simple process. Let us, for the sake of argument, though only for this, consent to leave the field of particular texts, and view the creed of those who believe only in the simple humanity of Christ, from their own selected stand-point.

Has it never occurred to this class of religionists, many of whom are worthy and intelligent, that their supposition of Christ being only a man, does not, and never can, satisfy the extraordinary conditions of the case? Do they not really behold in Jesus of Nazareth an agent who stands unapproachably higher than all others ever honoured by a Divine mission? There have been prophets sent of God who were mere men in their nature, but not one of these can be likened, on any just or tenable grounds, to the Redeemer of the world. His revelations, so numerous, so original, and so harmonious, are without any parallel in the records of ancient prophecy; and the system of spiritual truth established by him has received no additions during the eighteen centuries which have elapsed since his appearance on the earth. He came to do a work, in the main duties of which he could have no partner, however much the details might be carried out by the agency of prophets and apostles. He appeared at a particular crisis in the history of mankind, announcing from heaven the commencement of that kingdom on earth which no previous age could have witnessed; and, in fulfilling his mission, he stood alone in rank, as well as in responsibility and power. Such is assuredly the meaning of his own words. No mere man ever could say, or ever presumed to say, "*I am the light of the world.*" "*I am the way, the truth, and the life.*" "*Many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.*" "*Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad.*" "*The hour is*

coming when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." These words are only quoted as an illustration of his whole language, employed uniformly in reference to his own rank and mission. Such language would be simple impiety on the lips of any merely human being, but it is the true exponent of him who spoke as never man did before or since. He invariably refers to heavenly things as one to whom such sublime themes were entirely familiar. An apostle who was permitted to behold heavenly things, instantly became prostrate and speechless; but the Saviour speaks of the upper sanctuary as one who had dwelt there, and who expected soon to return to it as his native abode. "*Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.*"

Again, we ask respectfully whether Humanitarians have ever seriously contemplated the perfection—the *absolute perfection*—of Christ's character, and, if so, how can they reconcile this fact with the belief that he was merely a human being? The world has listened to the words, and witnessed the actions of many divinely-commissioned men, through whom God spake to the fathers of the Jewish people at sundry times, but of them, not one aspired to the *perfection* afterwards so gloriously exhibited in the life of his only-begotten Son. Throughout the Old and New Testaments we have sketches of the lives of many godly and honoured men—such as Abraham, Moses, Samuel, Elijah, Ezekiel, John, Peter, Paul, and others, but, of not one amongst them could it have been said, that "he knew no sin," that "he was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." On the contrary, they, one and all, confess their sins, and repent, and seek the forgiveness of God. Since their day, too, the lives of the *very best men ever known* have been darkened by imperfections, inconsistencies, and sins. This fact is perfectly established with respect to all men of every age and nation, however distinguished they may have been for their intellectual powers, or their acquirements in various departments of knowledge, or even their moral qualities. Whether they have been prophets or

apostles of the olden time, or instructors and benefactors of their brethren in modern days, it is the same in this respect. They have all sinned and come short of the glory of God. *Jesus stood alone here*, and we have thus the clearest and most intelligible proof that he was not, by nature, "a mere man." There exists not the shadow of evidence that he ever, for one moment, pursued a wrong course, or omitted to do what was exactly right in the varied and trying scenes through which he passed. *He* only could say with absolute truth—"I do always the things which please the Father." "*Which of you convinceth me of sin?*" "*The prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me.*" These and many other similar expressions of Jesus, *being absolutely true*, must demolish all arguments, however plausible, for his mere humanity.

Indeed, the fact of a Being antecedently so glorious, becoming,* for a time, an inhabitant of this world, and dwelling among us, is always spoken of by the Sacred writers as being, in itself, one of the most wondrous connected with our redemption. That He "who bore in heaven the second name"—the Word or Wisdom of God—should have humbled himself and submitted to persecution and death, are facts on which his apostles look back with unaffected wonder and amazement, although they were perfectly familiar with the prophecies which were thus accomplished. It is most remarkable, that with them his antecedent glory and absolute moral perfection are not so much the themes of admiration and gratitude as his humility in taking upon himself "the form of a servant." They speak of this as an act of unexampled condescension and love. Can this language of theirs, so freely and uniformly employed, be accounted for otherwise than on the supposition that they believed in his pre-existence? If Christ had been merely a man, what meaning would there be in this language of the apostles? If his nature was simply human, how could his condescension appear in his submitting to the ordinary vicissitudes of humanity? The apostles would not, and could not, have been so impressed with the common spectacle of a mere man living among other men, even although miraculously endowed. The prophets were never so spoken of, even when specially sent of God to reveal his will to

the people. Of the Saviour it is said, that "although he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich." Is there any meaning in this language, if the Redeemer had no pre-existent state of glory and power? The apostles always represent the mission of Christ as an act of *unparalleled love* on the part of God to man, as an unspeakably precious expression of his good-will to his creatures. "God so loved the world as to give his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life." How was it that the mission of Christ differed so much from the mission of any of the prophets, as to be a proof so much greater and more wondrous of God's love? only because Christ was nearer to God than any other of the messengers he had sent, for, whilst they were but servants, this was his Son in a sense altogether peculiar, his beloved Son in whom he was well-pleased.

Never but once was it permitted to human eyes to behold a Being inheriting the glory of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. Only once in all human history do we meet with Him whose exclusive mission was to seek and to save them that were lost, and who, in the accomplishment of this mission, did no sin, committed no injury, resented no wrong, uttered no untruth, neither was any deceit ever found in his mouth. Was not this glorious representative of his Father more than man? Was he not far above any man—the very best man—that ever lived, in his nature, in his office, and in his life? Socrates was one of the most exalted human beings the world has ever known; of him, as contrasted with others, a great poet has truly said, that he "lived and died as none can live or die;" but how little he appears in the presence of the Son of God, and how unsatisfactory become his teachings when compared with the infinitely clearer light of the Gospel! Socrates and Plato were wise, wondrously wise, but their knowledge was merely human, and they spoke with no certainty of the future. Jesus being "the Lord from heaven," spoke with that certainty and authority on this subject which we might expect, and which the human heart requires. Is it not peculiarly striking that, throughout his whole mission, not a shade of doubt ever darkened

his face, not a word of hesitation ever escaped from his lips, even in reference to that state which is emphatically the *Land of Shadows*, to mortal eyes? Socrates wavered here, only affirming, "IF death be a removal hence to another place, and IF what is said of the dead be true"—"those who live there are thenceforth immortal,—IF, at least what is said be true." The concluding words of his *Apology* are as follow:—"But the hour of separation has now come; I go to die, you (his judges) to live; but which of us is destined to an improved being is concealed from every one but God." In most remarkable contrast to this faith of the heroic philosopher, which faltered on the near approach of death, we behold the Saviour standing at the very foot of the cross, on the very brink of the grave, as in a region of serene and unclouded light. The nearer he approaches to Calvary and Gethsemane, the clearer and more authoritative are his utterances respecting the future. Was that the voice of a mere man which could venture to give forth such words as these? "*In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.*" "*Ye now have sorrow; but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.*" "*The world seeth me no more: but ye shall see me; because I live, ye shall live also.*" "*In that day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and you in me, and I in you.*" "*Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God be glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and will straightway glorify him.*"

We are entirely of opinion that Christ will never be fully or truly learned through the medium of human interpreters or polemical debaters. Let us go to our Bibles, if we wish really to know him, and we shall thus have an image of Him and his work formed in our hearts, far more truthful and real than could be obtained from any human system of Christology however advanced or ingenious.

X. X.

THE END OF OUR FAITH.

SALVATION is represented by an Apostle as "the end of our faith"—the great object at which we should aim. It is more to be desired and sought after than any earthly and outward good; and to every reflecting mind it will be the "one thing needful." Let any one that is awake to his spiritual being, and to a sense of the future life, be assured that he has salvation, and is living in communion with God, and how light and insignificant will appear all other considerations! How patiently may he bear all disappointments, calamities, and sufferings that may befall him! Let him feel that he is walking with God, and humbly endeavouring, according to his light, to do his will, and peace and tranquillity will possess his soul. The precise nature and extent of salvation we may not understand. Here, indeed, in some sense we may realize it in the peace of an approving conscience, and a perception of God's presence and love, restraining us from every sinful pursuit, and prompting us to holy thoughts and righteous deeds; but beyond, all is vague and indistinct; in that untried being we know not the height of felicity for the good, the depth of misery for the wicked. The Apostle throws perhaps as much light as is possible on the mysteries of the future existence, when he speaks of God in the life to come rendering to every man according to his deeds; to them that do evil, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish; but to them that work good, glory and honour and peace. And thus we have suggested to us foreshadowings of the future condition of the soul, in the painful feelings which here a wounded conscience and deep remorse produce, and in the sweet and hallowed joy which flows from temptations resisted, sins forsaken, unlawful desires sacrificed, and holy deeds performed. Consider the good to ourselves and others that springs from righteousness, the misery to others and ourselves that flows from wickedness; carry that good intensified indefinitely, and that evil deeply increased, into the future,—in comparison with which this life is but a span, a vapour,—and we may perceive that to win men to holiness, and through holiness to heaven, was an object most worthy of the exercise of God's power and wisdom. And our faith

is only for a moment shaken, when we reflect that the Gospel which the power of God has put forth for the salvation of men did not earlier appear—did not break forth in its light and comfort with the first dawn of man's earthly existence,—or at any rate when the first transgression threw its dark shade over the human soul: and when we farther reflect that only to a small portion of the human family even now is that Gospel published, and its invitations of rest and peace presented. Our doubts are removed when we see similar arrangements and partialities in nature. Thus we know that ages rolled on after the formation of this globe before beasts roamed over its plains, or birds warbled in groves and forests: and ages more elapsed before man trod upon its surface, and raised his face toward heaven. We cannot dictate to the Almighty, but our faith in him will not fail. Did we, indeed, believe that those millions who filled the earth before the advent of the Messiah, and those millions that have since lived and never have heard his name, would for ignorance of him and his Gospel be plunged into endless torments, our faith might falter and sink. We would feel that He whom we had been taught in our childhood to regard as our Father, was neither just nor good, and the beauty and brightness which nature now presents would seem only as transient gleams adding increased darkness to the desolation beyond. We should be careful to entertain no speculations, and to receive no interpretations of Scripture that would militate against the character of God, or drag Him down from his throne of justice and goodness.

REPLICATION TO THREE PROTESTS.

THE members of the Presbytery of Antrim who have recently withdrawn from that Body, entered Protests against certain decisions adopted at the meeting of Nov. 6th. To these Protests the residuary body have published a Replication, in which statements are made directly at variance with those embodied in the Protests. Both documents have been very widely circulated, so that all who desire may have an opportunity of carefully

examining them ; but it should be borne in mind, that in the controversy with which the Protest and Replication are connected, statements are not always facts, and the spirit of party, possibly without the knowledge of the writers, distorts and misleads.

The first Protest has reference to the rejection of a second Elder from a collegiate charge, and in the Replication it is alleged, that it was not the practice of the Presbytery of Antrim to admit two elders from the First Belfast Congregation. The truth is, it has not been their practice to receive even one. The meetings have been usually held without any lay representation at all, and rarely, if ever, in its whole history, has any question arisen, till within the last year, in which there was any contest among the members. But it is a fact, that two elders from that congregation were admitted to meetings of the General Synod of Ulster, as two were admitted from collegiate charges in the Synod itself ; for example, at the meeting in 1816, when a clerk was to be appointed in the place of the Rev. T. Cuming, and when every vote was narrowly scrutinized ; and, at meetings of the Non-Subscribing Association, from its formation in 1835, two members were admissible from First Belfast. At a later period, the lay members, generally, of the several congregations, were invited to attend the meetings of this Association, and sit and deliberate ; but, at first, its representation was identical with that of the bodies composing it. It is a cunning, but groundless distinction, which the writer of the Replication makes between the nature of the Association and that of its constituent bodies. The practice, therefore, was to give the First Congregation two elders. It is a matter for doubt, whether such a representation is equitable ; but, if it be not, it should have been abolished in a regular way, and not, as it was, irregularly and for a purpose.

The second Protest is against the rejection of Mr. Dundee, who was elected by the Session and Committee of the Ballyclare Congregation, and against the admission of Mr. Adamson, who was elected neither by the Committee and Session, nor yet by the Congregation. Mr. Dundee was fairly elected by the Session and Committee, and objection was only made to his appointment, when it

was found by Mr. Hall and his partizans that he would not pledge himself to vote as they desired. An effort was then made to have an elder appointed by the seatholders—a most unprecedented course in that Congregation. It would appear that the votes on each side were equal, and no election was made. Afterwards, Mr. Hall's friends nominated Mr. Adamson. We have the best authority for stating, that in the congregational meeting neither was duly elected; and yet Mr. Adamson was admitted to sit in the Presbytery, and Mr. Dundee, the elder chosen almost unanimously by the Session and Committee, was rejected. No wonder that the Congregation felt indignant at such conduct, and sought by a public entertainment to express their sympathy with their aged friend, and with the principles which, in his rejection, were outraged by a majority of the Presbytery.

The third Protest was against the admission of York Street Congregation. On this subject the views of both parties may already be fully known, and the Replication throws no light on them. It objects "that a minister duly qualified to teach the Gospel should be compelled, after his election to a Christian congregation, to answer for the satisfaction of an ecclesiastical tribunal, and to bow to their commandments, instead of submitting to the authority and cherishing the spirit of Him who is our only Lawgiver, Guide, and Master." Very good. The protestors would object as strongly. Let them only be satisfied that a man is "duly qualified," and they would not presume to interrogate him respecting his particular interpretation of Scripture; but they would not regard any man as so qualified, nor would they set him forth as "a model minister," if he did not reverently acknowledge the divine mission of Christ, and, therefore, his claim to be their "only Lawgiver, Guide, and Master." A feeble and disingenuous attempt is made to show that the views of Church government entertained by the residuary Presbytery are those which were advocated by the founders of the body. They say that "their predecessors at Dunganon, in their propositions and expedients for peace, argued that candidates *may* give clear and sufficient evidence of their soundness, and of their fitness to preach the Christian faith, without subscribing or professing

an assent to any imposed confession." Now, it is worthy of remark, that the writer of the Replication has cunningly, but most unfairly, italicized the word "may," thus suggesting that candidates may give evidence if they are so inclined, but that if from obstinacy, self-conceit, or disbelief in any divine element in Christianity, they are not disposed, it does not signify; they are to be ordained at any rate, if only the congregation desire it: and farther it is added, with a coolness that surprises us, that by "soundness" the founders of the Presbytery meant "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit!" The following is the Proposition which has been thus distorted and mutilated to serve a purpose:—

"Candidates for the holy ministry may give clear and sufficient evidence of their soundness in the faith without subscribing or professing an assent to any one imposed uninspired form of Articles or Confessions of Faith; and they may as fully satisfy their ordainers concerning their fitness to preach the Christian faith, without subscribing any such confession, as they may prove their aptness to preside in the public worship of God without declaring their assent to any prescribed human Liturgy or Form of Prayer."

It is quite evident, then, that the ordainers should be satisfied of the fitness of the candidate for the work which he undertakes,—the very point at issue; and it is farther evident, that the early members of the Presbytery never dreamed of receiving any one of whose Christian principles, technically termed "soundness in the faith," they were not satisfied. What they objected to, and what the protestors alike oppose, is the requiring of assent to *human tests of divine truth*. A flourish is made of the names of Bruce and Ledlie, Nelson, M'Ewen, and Johnson, as sympathizers in these loose views of Church government. How do they know that they were so? Principles so very free and advanced were never broached in their day; and if they had been, the practice of these worthies would greatly have belied their preaching, if they would not have joined the minority in loudly protesting against them. But what need, it may be asked, for anything else, if candidates admit the Holy Scriptures as "the sole rule of faith." The Scriptures as the sole rule of faith! Why, at this very time, some ministers of the Presbytery are diligently circulating among their

people a tract which repudiates the idea of the "Sufficiency of the Scriptures as the sole rule of faith." It is too plain that the principles of the seceding and residuary bodies are quite opposite on the subject of Church government. This being so, it was well that they should separate. Farther discussion is not likely, at least at present, to lead to good. The prospects of the Non-Subscribing Church are indeed dark, but an overruling and all-wise Father may bring good in a way which we see not out of the present divisions. That it may be so, should be the earnest prayer of all.

REVIEW.

LITTLE WALTER; *or, a Mother's First Lessons on Religious Subjects.*
Second Edition, pp. 281. London, 1852.

THIS interesting volume is the first of a "series of books designed to contain a systematic course of religious instruction." It was published several years ago, and the impression was soon exhausted. We welcome this second and enlarged edition of a book which seems admirably suited to aid parents in instilling the great truths of the Christian faith into the mind and heart of childhood. It is the first volume of the series, and intended to be used with very young children. It treats in the simplest manner most important subjects—as the Soul and its worth; Conscience; God—his omnipresence and omniscience, his loving-kindness in sending trials; Accountability; Prayer; Revelation. The following picture, which forms the introduction to the work is a fair sample of its style, and suggests the plan on which it is prepared:—

"Walter was a little happy, thoughtful, loving child. His mother used to put him to bed every night. Night after night, ever since he was a very little baby, she had never forgotten to wash him, and warm him, and put him snugly into his little bed. One night, when he had been washed, and his hair combed, and he had got on his nice clean bedgown, he was sitting on his mother's knee by the bright blazing fire; there was no one else in the room but Walter and his mother; and there was

no candle, but the fire blazed up so cheerily that it lighted the whole room : and it was a pleasant sound to listen to—the crackling of the blazing wood. Walter sat very snugly in his mother's lap, while she warmed his feet at the fire before putting him into his little bed. She was singing to him very softly, and when she stopped singing, she looked very lovingly down into Walter's face, and the little boy looked lovingly at her too ; and he raised himself, and put his little arms round her neck, and his lips close to her ear, and whispered, ' I wish *you* had a mother to put you to bed.'

" ' Well, my child,' she said, ' I had a mother once ; and now, though she is gone, I am still cared for—and watched over—and loved ;—oh, yes ! loved so tenderly ! and taken care of far better than I can take care of you.'

" Walter looked wonderingly in his mother's face, and his mother looked at him a good while, then she gave him a loving kiss and put him into his little bed. Walter thought a little while who his mother could mean, that took such care of her ; but he had been running about all day, so his eyes soon shut, and his little thoughts ceased, and he dropped asleep almost before his mother had reached the bottom of the stairs.

" Many and many times after that night did Walter and his mother talk together earnestly about great and high things, such as very little children often hardly think of ; but Walter had been early encouraged to *think* ; his father used to listen to all his little questions, and try to answer them—and when his father died, his mother felt that she must now supply the place of both father and mother to him, as well as she could ; and often, after *his* eyes had been long closed in sleep, did she sit pondering many things in her heart, and trying to see how she could best lead onwards and upwards the loving child, who as yet looked to her *alone* for help and guidance. Many a Scripture passage, and many a piece of sacred poetry then aptly came to her memory, and instructed and also soothed her. Some of these, and of the thoughts that came to her in the earnestness of her desires for her children's welfare, and some of the conversations which arose from these nightly meditations, and of the hymns which the little boy learnt by heart afterwards, are offered in this little volume, believing that they may be suggestive and interesting to parents and teachers, and young people of various ages ; for the periods of life are various when questions touching the solemn topics of God and the Soul first loudly appeal for answers ; and the simple queries and remarks of the child often sound the depth of the highest mysteries. Though often difficult to answer, nay, sometimes impossible to reply to, they are not to be dismissed, but reverently entered into, if we would not 'quench the smoking flax.' "

The conversations are interspersed with many texts of Scripture and beautiful hymns, while at the head of each chapter are references to books that may aid the teacher, and among these books the writings of Channing and Ware justly hold a prominent place.

CHRIST AT THE DOOR.

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."—Rev. iii. 20.

LORD, what am I, that with unceasing care
Thou didst seek after me,—that thou didst wait,
Wet with unhealthy dews, before my gate,
And pass the gloomy night of winter there?
Oh strange delusion!—that I did not greet
Thy blest approach, and oh, to heaven how lost,
If my ingratitude's unkindly frost
Has chilled the bleeding wounds upon thy feet.
How oft my guardian angel gently cried—
"Soul, from thy casement look, and thou shalt see
How he persists to knock and wait for thee!"
And oh! how often to that voice of sorrow,
"To-morrow we will open," I replied,
And when the morrow came, I answered still,
"To-morrow."

Translated from the Spanish by H. W. Longfellow.

MISSTATEMENTS CORRECTED.

THE recent decision in the Rolls Court, Dublin, respecting the Ballyclare Meeting-house, which we have reported in another part of our present number, has brought from the London *Inquirer* of June 14th, a short article abounding in misstatements, and characterized by the partizan spirit for which that paper has been so conspicuous. It is our great desire to keep out of our pages everything of personal disagreement and recrimination, and only to give statements of facts, and explanations which justice to parties assailed seems to demand: and we shall, therefore, dispose of the article referred to in a few lines.

It is objected that Dr. Montgomery "refused to pay the Rev. John Hall his *Regium Donum*, as a member of the Old Presbytery of Antrim, till enjoined by the Lord Lieutenant." True; and he could not have done otherwise. The Congregation had deliberately withdrawn from that Presbytery on February 2nd, and had joined another body. The Lord Lieutenant, on being officially informed of this, directed that the minister of Ballyclare should be paid as a member of the Northern Presbytery; and Dr. Montgomery had no choice in the matter. The Revs. J. S. Porter and C. J. McAlester are accused of "going through the solemn mockery of conducting

religious services at Ballyclare." How far the Rev. Editor of *The Inquirer* and the adherents of Mr. Hall might have so regarded them we cannot say, but the crowded congregations who joined in them seemed to think otherwise, and although they are not so advanced as some of the opposing party, they are not on that account the less qualified to appreciate the ministrations they may receive. The article further states that these reverend gentlemen, with the other members of the Northern Presbytery, "actually appointed another minister in place of Mr. Hall." This is a mere fiction, which has not even the apology that most fictions have, of being "founded on fact." That such a statement obtained publicity in *The Inquirer*, those who know the *animus* of that paper towards the Rev. J. S. Porter and others will not wonder; but that it was copied, with a sentence of introduction, into the columns of *The Northern Whig*—a paper which should have known the whole facts of the case, and whose high position for so many years, as an honourable and impartial journal, should protect it from the suspicion of party bias—is strange and unaccountable.

REV. HUGH MOORE AND REV. C. J. M'ALESTER.

A PARAGRAPH appeared in the last number of the *Christian Unitarian*, stating that some person signing himself "A Member of the Holywood Congregation," had accused the Rev. C. J. M'Alester of writing a grossly insulting letter to the Rev. Hugh Moore, in which, also, he conveyed a slander against the members of his own flock. The facts of the case were stated, and the letter itself given *verbatim*, in order to show that these accusations were entirely without foundation. We have received a letter from Mr. Moore commenting on the circumstances which led Mr. M'Alester to take the course he did; but, as it throws no light on the subject of the paragraph, we do not publish it. If Mr. Moore had written, as he might have done, to contradict the unjust charge that had been preferred against a brother minister, and to state that while he did not approve of the course Mr. M'Alester had taken, there was yet nothing insulting in the letter he had received from him, but that on the contrary it was civil and courteous, we would most cheerfully have published his communication: or if he had shewn that in our paragraph, we had misstated the facts, we would have felt bound to correct the error; but that, of course, he did not attempt to do. He complains that we did not publish his reply to Mr. M'Alester. Why should we have done so? Our business was simply to show, in refutation of an anonymous accuser, what Mr. M'Alester had done; and Mr. Moore's letter could not in any way alter the case. Mr. Moore hints that some other reason than what Mr. M'Alester assigns—some "more worldly and less creditable motive"—led him to act the part he did. To impute motives thus to a brother is not generous; but let him set about trying to prove what he insinuates, and if he succeed, we promise that the result of his labours shall have due publicity in our pages.

INTELLIGENCE.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION.

THE anniversary of this Association was held in Boston on May 27th. The business meeting was held in Arlington Church at 9 o'clock, the Rev. Dr. Hedge, the President, in the chair. There was a much larger attendance than usual. The report of the Executive Committee congratulated the Association upon a greater success than was anticipated at the last annual meeting. The number of societies contributing to the funds of the Association had been greatly increased. Much good, it was believed, had been done under the operations of the Army Fund, by which a great number of tracts, the Monthly Journal, Soldier's Companion, and other papers had been distributed. The missionary labours of the Association had been encouraging, especially that of the Rev. C. H. Dall in India. Dr. Hedge having declined a re-election as President, the Rev. Dr. Stebbins was appointed in his stead, and the other officers of the Association were elected, consisting of the Vice-President and a Board of Directors, with Treasurer and Secretary.

The public meeting was held in the Rev. Dr. Gannet's Church. After singing, prayer was offered by the Rev. Dr. Briggs, of Salem, and an address was delivered by the Rev. W. H. Channing, of Washington.

The Festival was held in the afternoon. Instead of the elaborate collation of former years, the Committee had prepared a simple, but ample repast, for the ministers and their wives, at Allston Hall. At 5 o'clock the company assembled, and, after an hour of social converse, adjourned into the Music Hall, passing through a passage which leads directly from one building into the other. In the meantime, the audience in the Music Hall had assembled. The exercise commenced with a voluntary on the organ. An appropriate prayer was then offered by Rev. Dr. Hall, of Providence. Thomas Gaffield, Esq., then took the chair, and addressed the meeting at some length, offering to the clergy and their friends a cordial welcome to their social gathering. The meeting was addressed by Rev. Drs. Parkman and Gannett, Henry Ware, jun., Hon. Stephen Fairbanks, Rev. Messrs. Allen, Stetson, Robinson, Hosmer, Colman, and Folsom. An original hymn was then sung by the audience, after which the Rev. Mr. Tiffany, on the part of the clergy, returned thanks to their Boston friends for the friendly greeting they had given them. The Rev. A. B. Fuller, chaplain of a Massachusetts Regiment, next spoke. He remarked, that the chaplains of all denominations stand shoulder to shoulder and work for the common cause. In camp there is no such thing as sect thought of. A chaplain is only known as a minister of Christ, and the words of all are freely exchanged in all the regiments, whether the chaplain is a Methodist, a Calvinist, an Episcopalian, or a Unitarian.

After a short intermission, the Rev. E. E. Hale, Rev. Dr. Osgood

and Rev. W. H. Channing spoke. A hymn, sung by all present, closed the proceedings, which were, throughout, of a most interesting and refreshing kind.

AMERICAN SUNDAY-SCHOOL SOCIETY.

The annual meeting of this Society was held in the South Congregational Church, Boston, on May 28th. The services were opened by a chant finely rendered by the children of one of the schools. The Rev. Dr. Farley offered a prayer, and the President of the Society, the Rev. Dr. Hill, of Worcester, spoke earnestly of the various results to which Providence is directing the movements of the Sunday-school. There were many indications that the good work was going on prosperously. A silent blessing seemed to be constantly shed upon their efforts, and they might look eventually for the full fruition of all their hopes. The Secretary, Mr. Allen, then read the report. The Rev. E. E. Hale then addressed the meeting. He referred to the effective power which in every congregation the Sunday-school afforded to enlarge the spiritual fold. The best teacher he ever knew, finding his boys uneasy under the theological questionings of a theological manual, said to his class, "Throw aside your books, and try in this coming week to see how many of these vagrant boys, whose voices you hear in the street, you can bring to our School-room next Sunday for a cheerful service." Do you not believe that the listlessness passed off, that the disposition to count the buttons upon their jackets, the restless, uneasy postures of that Sunday-school hour were driven away? And so as this principle is extended of making the children and the teachers do a certain kind of missionary work, what more effective working force do you want in a church than the half dozen teachers and fifty children who can work with such a zeal. The Rev. Mr. Bush, of Medfield, expressed his faith in the Sunday-school, because he had faith in the power of earnest, loving minds to impress themselves upon others. He also had faith in it, because he had faith in the power of the Gospel and of Christian truth. Farther, he had faith in it, because he had faith in the impressibility of children. The Rev. Mr. Fay then read an address of some length, of which our space will not admit of our giving even an outline.

THE BRITISH AND FOREIGN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION.

The annual meeting of this Association took place in London on June 11th. The religious service was held in Essex Street Church, and was largely attended. The introductory services were conducted by the Rev. J. Panton Ham, and the Rev. W. Gaskell preached from John xviii. 37. He dwelt with much earnestness on the importance of bearing continued and unwavering testimony to the truth, pointed out what seemed to him the duty of the Unitarian Church, if it would be faithful to the position in which God had placed it, and concluded by exhorting his hearers to draw a lesson from the noble fidelity to principle which was shown by the brave Two Thousand, who gave up their livings in the English church, and went forth to meet privation and scorn; never to listen

to any selfish, time-serving pleas to lower the claims of conviction, but be ready, through cloud and sunshine, through honour and dishonour, everywhere and at all times, to follow the truth, and in the spirit of their Holy Master, "to bear witness" to it.

At the conclusion of the service, J. A. Turner, Esq., M.P., took the chair, and the Secretary, the Rev. R. B. Aspland, read the report for the past year. It gave a voluminous detail of its operations, embracing Transylvania, India, and Italy. Grants have been made to Ballarat, Toronto, and Frankfort. The revised translation of the Old Testament was now completed, and was published at 24s., but might be obtained for 18s. by direct application to the Secretary. Ministers and congregations taking six copies might have them for £5. During the year there had been distributed in the way of grants, 20,828 books and tracts. During the year a number of special tracts had been prepared for general distribution, by Sir John Bowring and others, particular reference being made to the bi-centenary tract entitled "The Church that might be National." A statement was made relative to the intended increased efforts of the Association to propagate Unitarianism in England. It has been resolved to originate three agents in connection with the local societies in Scotland, Staffordshire Potteries, and in Kent; to the two former the Association intended to contribute £100 each, and to the latter £75. The Committee had gladly undertaken to distribute the Bi-centenary Fund, which was intended to be devoted to increasing the salaries of poor ministers, and the support of missions. During the year two legacies, one of £100 and another of £500, had been left to the Association.

The adoption of the report was moved by Alderman J. C. Lawrence, and seconded by the Rev. P. W. Clayden.

Professor J. J. Tayler moved "That this Association learns with unmingled satisfaction that the revised translation of the Old Testament, which has for so many years engaged the attention of successive committees, is completed, and takes the earliest opportunity of tendering to the Rev. John Kenrick, M.A., the Rev. George Vance Smith, B.A., and the Rev. John Scott Porter, its grateful acknowledgment of the learning and care with which they have executed their respective portions of the work." He described the translation as having a higher value than being merely for the use of those who were critically engaged in studying the Scriptures; it was intended for the practical and devotional culture of the minds of the great body of Christians.

Mr. Long seconded the resolution.

Other resolutions, including one of sympathy with the Queen in her recent sad bereavement, were moved by Sir John Bowring, Revds. Dr. Sadler, E. Talbot, T. Madge, T. Marshall, R. E. B. Maclellan, J. H. Ryland, and Messrs. Heywood, Statham, and Marsden. All the resolutions were passed unanimously.

At four o'clock, a large company of ladies and gentlemen sat down to a cold collation in the Freemason's Hall, which was well filled. J. A. Turner, Esq., M.P., occupied the chair. Addresses were delivered by Sir John Bowring, Revds. W. Gaskell and R. B. Aspland, Dr. Miles, of Boston, U.S., Alderman J. C. Lawrence, and Revds. H. W. Crosskey and J. Panton Ham.

THE LONDON SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION.

The annual meeting of this Society was held on the morning of June 12th, in the large hall of Whittington Club, Strand. There was a large number of country as well as London ministers present; and though the morning was most unfavourable, the attendance was greater than at any former meeting.

After breakfast the Rev. P. W. CLAYDEN, of Nottingham, took the chair. In his introductory remarks he dwelt on the value of Sunday Schools, and said we should make our Sunday Schools the nurseries of religion for our church. This was of more importance than any secular results. And the best thing to fit a teacher for the work was personal experience of the grace of God. If all secular teaching be a failure, and we can by personal contact in our Sunday Schools do the children spiritual good, we have done what is best of all. He urged teachers to labour on in faith; their exertions, as "bread cast upon the waters, would be found after many days."

The Secretary, Mr. WADE, read the Report, which suggested the propriety of taking into consideration some special service to mark the entrance of young people into our church, and the importance of infant schools. District associations were also recommended. The association during the past year had brought out three new class books for Sunday Schools. 1. "Stories for Sunday Afternoons," by Mrs. George Dawson. 2. "Reading Book, in short words," by Miss Crompton. 3. "Scenes from the Life of St Paul." Also, new editions of "Greenwood's Short Services," and the "Sunday School Hymn Book," were being issued. An appeal for support concluded the report, as the treasurer had generously taken upon himself for the time being the deficit of upwards of one hundred pounds.

The Rev. W. H. CROSSKEY moved the adoption of the report. He dissuaded teachers from instructing the young children in doctrinal theology. Mr. Crosskey spoke with much force and beauty on the faith of children in eternal realities, and their perfect confidence in a future world when told to believe so by their parents. They could say "good by" in the sleep of death, as if they were preparing for some little journey. Such were the natural emotions of the soul. As years increased, the form of instruction should rise higher and higher, and be adapted entirely to the growing power of the minds of children, until they were fitted to receive the full light of truth.

The Rev. D. MAGINNIS briefly seconded the report.

The Rev. R. SPEARS spoke on the question "How best to promote the improvement and extension of schools, and strengthen the union that should subsist between Church and School." He feared we did not, as a Christian church and as British Christians, rise to the full height of the importance of the mission which was given us by Divine Providence. There was a complaint in our schools often of a want of teachers. That must be because our people did not rise in their minds to the grandeur of the mission we had now in hand. The children growing up around us were destined to fill stations in all parts of the world; and they would reflect honour or dishonour upon us as a nation and church in every quarter of the globe, in proportion as we did or did not do our duty to them now.

Dr. Priestley could say, at the close of a long, useful, and exalted life, nothing gave him more pleasure than the hours he had spent in teaching the young of his charge in the several churches with which he had been connected. How many of us are prepared to say this?

The Rev. J. MARTINEAU followed. He said it was of vast importance that our congregations should supply us with teachers of the highest class; and that those in higher positions should show an interest here, lest we should lose our hold of the mass of the people altogether. There were duties connected with our Sunday Schools in which all classes could do something. There were many ladies among us who might perform important service in visiting. The teachers, no doubt, were the most appropriate visitors, but others of the congregation could surely take a share in this work. He strongly recommended an organization of regular visitors. It was a matter of the utmost importance that we should have the attendance of those of a more advanced age, as well as the younger children. The most intelligent members of our churches should see to this, and form classes, and make the instruction of a first-class character, to secure this advantage for our schools. Another point of great interest was the fit and proper form to impress the younger people with the importance of connecting themselves with a Christian Church. There should be no attempt on our part to interfere with the choice of the parents and their advice in this matter.

The Revds. J. J. TAYLER and J. ROBERTSON spoke on the subject of a special service to mark the entrance of the Sunday scholars into membership with the church. Mr. F. Morton said he was afraid we did not sufficiently value the importance of the Sunday School. We, as members of the church, should extend the usefulness of the school by placing our own children among the others gathered for instruction without distinction. By this we inculcated the love of the Sunday School. His father did so when he was a child; and this has had greater weight than any other thing. He thought it was a wrong principle at work in our schools which separated the boys and girls into different schools or different classes. The number of children attending the school, and not the number on the books, was the criterion by which to judge of the usefulness of our schools. He recommended more rigid discipline to secure a better attendance. The absences of his school were reduced from 52 to 5 per cent. by greater application to this point.

The meeting was afterwards addressed by the the Revds. J. C. Means, R. Gibson, J. Shannon, and Messrs. C. Corkran, and J. Worthington.

WEST RIDING UNITARIAN MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

The annual gathering of the ministers and congregations of the West Riding for the 47th anniversary of the Tract Society, and 12th of the Mission, was held at Leeds on June 11th. There was a large attendance of ministers and laymen. The service was opened by the Rev. T. W. Frackleton of Bradford. The Rev. Charles Beard, B.A., of Gee Cross, preached an able and eloquent sermon. At the conclusion of the religious services the company adjourned to a collation in the Congregational Hall, after which the annual meeting was held, William Brown, Esq., in the chair. The Rev. R.

L. Carpenter read the annual report, which gave interesting details of the missionary operations during the year, among which was the completion of a new Unitarian Church at Pudsey, built in the early Gothic style, accommodating 300 persons, with a most commodious school-room in the basement storey. Among the resolutions proposed was one of welcome to the new missionary, the Rev. Henry Eachus, and of congratulation to the congregations of Pudsey and Pepper Hill, amongst whom he will labour, on having entered on their new places of worship. Mr. Eachus, in responding, expressed his deep interest in the work he had undertaken, and his hope of hearty co-operation on the part of the committee and supporters of the mission. The meeting was also addressed by E. Bramley, J. Stansford, D. Lupton, and H. Briggs, Esqs.; and the Revds. C. Beard, T. Frackleton, J. C. Hopps, B. Herford, J. Dixon, W. Blazely, T. Hincks, and N. Green, and Dr. Greenlow.

IRISH UNITARIAN CHRISTIAN SOCIETY.

The anniversary sermons of this Society were preached in Dublin, on Sunday, the 11th May, by the Rev. Brooke Herford, of Sheffield, in Strand Street Meeting House at noon, from 1 Peter iv. 19, and in the evening in Eustace Street Meeting-House, from Jeremiah xxiii. 28.

On the Monday evening following, the members and friends of the Society held a social meeting in the Pillar-room of the Rotunda. William Haughton, Esq., occupied the chair in the room of Robert Andrews, Esq. (President), unavoidably absent from Dublin, and after a hymn had been sung by the meeting, opened the proceedings with a very appropriate and admirable address. He then proposed "The Irish Unitarian Christian Society," which was responded to by the Secretary, the Rev. G. A. Armstrong. "Our cordial welcome to the Rev. Brooke Herford, and thanks for his valuable services" was proposed by Mr. James Haughton and seconded by Dr. Kidd. Mr. Herford replied, and dwelt on the importance of being earnest about our faith. If their views, he said, were not of deep importance, then let them all go in among the other churches, and work for liberal Christianity there. If, however, they felt, as surely they all did, that such a course was impossible, then were they bound to speak out their truth to the world in no uncertain sound. Who should do it if they did not? Some one had said that there was much free thought in the Church, many a Nicodemus secretly holding their liberal views. He didn't believe in such liberal Christians. He had no faith in such Nicodemuses. The strength of free religion never lay in men who publicly conformed to the creeds and privately put liberal interpretations on them, but in those who dare stand forth, as their fathers had done 200 years ago, for conscience' sake; he would not say, stand forth with them as Unitarians, but stand forth as thoroughly as they did for the simple religion of Christ. The Chairman then gave "The Memory of the Two Thousand." Mr. P. Meadows Taylor responded. He was himself the lineal descendant of at least two of those noble-hearted honest men—the Rev. Thomas Weld, rector of Gateshead, in Durham, and the Rev. John Meadows,

rector of Ousden. "A Progressive Theology characteristic of the present age" was spoken to by the Rev. D. D. Jeremy. "Civil and Religious Liberty all the world over" was responded to by Mr. Andrew M. Porter. He said that among all their differences it was clearly their duty to respect in every man, Unitarian, Trinitarian, or Deist, the free exercise of his own private judgment; and the free exercise of their own private judgment, and the manly, honest avowal of its results, was the best way to make themselves and their opinions respected, to break down prejudice, and thus to destroy the most powerful enemy among them to perfect practical as well as theoretical religious liberty.

Thanks having been voted to the chairman, the proceedings closed with a hymn and benediction.

THE NORTHERN SUNDAY-SCHOOL ASSOCIATION.

The annual meeting of this unpretending, but most useful Society, was held on Monday evening, May 26th, in the vestry of the Second Meeting-house, Rosemary Street, Belfast,—the Rev. Henry Eachus in the chair. After prayer by the chairman, the Secretary, the Rev. C. J. M'Alester, read the Report and Statement of Accounts for the last year. The Report referred, among other matters, to Sunday-School Tracts which the Committee had published in the course of the year, and to others which were in preparation, and strongly urged the importance of systematic instruction in every school, as without it the labours of the teachers will not possess the interest or accomplish the good which they might do. The Report was adopted on the motion of the Rev. J. Scott Porter, seconded by Mr. Robert M'Calmont. The Rev. John Jellie moved a resolution on the value of the Sunday-School as an instrumentality for promoting the moral and spiritual culture of the young, and dwelt at some length on the good which may be accomplished when the teachers are actuated by an earnest desire to help the children, and when thus the school is rendered attractive and interesting. He went on to show the still higher value of home-teaching, where it was virtuous and religious. In such a case, home and the Sunday-School combine to train up the young in Christian faith and practice; but even when home is a nursery for sin, the Sunday-School may do much to counteract its baleful influences, and lead the young in the paths of holiness. Mr. W. H. Greer seconded the resolution. Other resolutions, conveying the thanks of the Association to the Hibernian Bible Society, and expressing sympathy with the London and Manchester Sunday-School Societies, were moved and seconded by the Revds. C. J. M'Alester and John Porter, and Messrs. L. Drennan and W. Spackman. After the appointment of the Committee for the next year, the Rev. John Porter was moved to the second chair, and on the motion of Mr. M'Alester, seconded by Mr. J. Scott Porter, the thanks of the meeting were given to Mr. Eachus for his kindness in presiding, and for the deep interest he had uniformly taken in the Sunday-School while in Belfast.

TEACHERS' UNION.

At the termination of the proceedings of the Sunday-School Association, Mr. Eachus, as Secretary of the Teachers' Union, sub-

mitted the Annual Report, which detailed its operations in the past year, particularizing the names of those who had given lectures, and the subjects on which they had lectured. A Committee for the next year was appointed, Mr. Jellie undertaking the office of Secretary and Treasurer, in the place of Mr. Eachus, who was leaving Belfast. The meeting was closed with prayer.

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE PRESBYTERY OF ANTRIM.

On Wednesday, May 28th, a special meeting of the Presbytery of Antrim was held in the Second Meeting-house, Belfast, the Rev. S. C. Nelson, Moderator, in the chair, to receive an application from the Rev. W. Hall and the Non-Subscribing Congregation of Greyabbey, to be admitted into that body. The clerk read the joint memorial of the minister and Congregation of Greyabbey, which stated, that the Remonstrant Synod, in its new Code, had enacted that certain doctrinal questions must be answered in the affirmative by every minister before ordination or installation; that memorialists considered such a regulation an unwarrantable interference with the rights of conscience, and a violation of the fundamental principles of the Synod; that they had, therefore, ceased to have any ecclesiastical connexion with that body, and they prayed to be received into the Presbytery of Antrim. It was moved by the Rev. D. Watson, and seconded by Mr. E. Gardner, elder, that the prayer of the memorialists be complied with, and that the Greyabbey Congregation be received into connexion with the Presbytery of Antrim. Mr. Gardner, in seconding the resolution, took occasion to refer to the Moneyrea Congregation, which had recently joined them, and spoke of its late minister, Mr. Blakely, as possessing more knowledge of the principles on which the Remonstrant Synod was founded than any other member of that body; he did not come forward very frequently in the public assemblies of the church, but behind the scenes he furnished the ammunition which was so well fired by Dr. Montgomery. The Rev. John Porter spoke in support of the resolution. He said that a foul, calumnious, and slanderous outcry had been raised against them of infidelity, but that it did not frighten honest and straightforward men like the people of Moneyrea and Greyabbey; it was for another reason than infidelity that certain persons thought proper to leave them, but, he would venture to affirm, that from the organization of the Presbytery, down till the present time, there never was a man in the body who could be charged with being a Deist or a half Deist. The resolution was passed unanimously, and the Moderator, in a few words, conveyed to Mr. Hall and the Commissioners his high gratification that they had been received into the Presbytery of Antrim. After some routine business, the proceedings were closed by the Moderator pronouncing the benediction.

[Mr. Porter is quite correct in stating that the ministers who have seceded from the Presbytery did not do so because they believed that some of the members were Deists or half Deists. He intimates that he knows the reason which led them to do so, and

he would be very dull, indeed, if he did not; but, as he has not explained it, we shall, in a sentence, supply the omission. The Presbytery, by a majority of votes, indignantly spurned the idea of requiring any minister who would enter their body to acknowledge Christ's divine mission, thereby distinctly implying, that if a congregation chose any one to be their minister, they would ordain him whether he believed in the divine mission of the Saviour or not. Was that not ground enough to justify secession? As the residuary Presbytery interprets, or rather misinterprets, the principles of the church, there is nothing to prevent a half Deist, or even a Deist, from becoming a minister in its connexion.—
ED. CH. UN.]

MEETING-HOUSE OF BALLYCLARE.

Our readers are already aware, that in consequence of directions given by the Presbytery of Antrim to its partisans in the Congregation of Ballyclare, the practical effect of which (if carried out) would have been to transfer the possession and management of the congregational property from the majority of the congregation to the Rev. John Hall, and a minority consisting of not more than one-third of the members, the Session and Committee resolved to close the meeting-house for a time, until either an amicable settlement should be obtained, or the rights of the parties should be legally adjusted. They are also aware that, since the closing of the meeting-house, the members of the majority have, with the assistance of some neighbouring ministers, carried on public worship in the Court-house of the town; and that Mr. Hall, having refused the use of a school-room, which was offered to him by one of his opponents, conducted every Sunday a religious service in the open air. He and his adherents applied to the Court of Chancery for an order to have the meeting-house re-opened; their petition will come on for a hearing and decision in next Michaelmas Term, which begins on the 2nd of November; but the Master of the Rolls has, after argument on affidavits from the parties, issued an order that, in the meantime, the meeting-house shall be opened, and no obstruction offered to the minister in conducting public worship as usual. Of the correctness of this decision we entertain no doubt whatever. It will be seen, however, that it does not touch the main question in dispute between the parties; and that even if the temporary order be made permanent, it will not decide the great matters that are at issue between them. We apprehend that the majority have already secured the end which they had in view in temporarily closing their place of worship; namely, that no farther attempt will be made by the minority to usurp the control of the property of the congregation.

At the same time, we cannot refrain from expressing our dissatisfaction at the manner in which the cause of the majority was advocated at the bar of the Master of the Rolls; and we trust that when the case comes on for a hearing upon the merits, means will be taken to let the counsel for the defendants understand what are

the views which their clients assert, and what are the principles maintained by the Northern Presbytery of Antrim to which they are attached. Nothing could be more palpable than the ignorance displayed by Messrs. Brewster and Chatterton on both these points. We ought to mention that Mr. J. J. Kirkpatrick, one of the defendants, applied to have his name struck off the record, on the ground that he had had nothing whatever to do with the proceedings against which the petitioners complained. His application was refused.

We understand that since the interim order was passed by the Court, the solicitor for the petitioners demanded possession of the key of the meeting-house,—a point which was not raised before the Master of the Rolls, nor mentioned in his decree. The demand was, however, complied with, though under protest. The prudence, and even the legality, of this proceeding seem to us very questionable.

OBITUARY.

Died at his residence, Newtownards, on the 16th June, Thomas Rodgers, Esq., in the 66th year of his age.

At Tullycarnett, Knock, on the 10th June, in the 13 year of her age, Margaret Walker, youngest daughter of James Hamilton M'Master.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

The second part of "The Church of the First Three Centuries" is in type, but held over on account of the unusual length of our first article.

"A Visit to an English Reformatory" received with thanks.

The Letter of "J. C." declined.

"God's Voice from China to the Unitarian Churches," and the Letter of "Britannicus" received. We request the address of the writer.

"A Friend" wishes to know the correct meaning of the term "Humanitarian." It seems now to be used in two senses, and thus leads to misunderstanding. In one sense it denotes those who, in opposition to the Arian, do not believe in Christ's pre-existence, but yet hold as decidedly as other Christians the doctrine of Christ's divine mission; and of this school have been some of the most illustrious and excellent Christians, and most successful defenders of Divine Revelation and the authority of Scripture. In another sense it signifies those who regard Christ as a mere man, having no supernatural gifts or mission.

Communications for the Editor, to be addressed by post to Rev. C. J. M'Alester, Holywood; or, otherwise, to 28, Arthur Street, Belfast.

Orders for the work and business communications to be sent to the Agent of the Society, 28, Arthur Street.

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[No. 7.]

NON-SUBSCRIBERS—WHO AND WHY.

IN the discussions that have lately agitated the liberal Presbyterian Churches in Ulster, the question must often have arisen to every reflecting mind—What is implied in Non-Subscription, and who are justly entitled to the name of Non-Subscribers? To such a question two distinct and opposite answers will be given. Some have argued, and with apparent reason, that all who refuse to sign any creed or confession of faith, may justly claim the title of Non-Subscribers, no matter what views of Christian doctrine they entertain, no matter whether they believe in the divine authority of the Christian Revelation, or regard it as merely a well-arranged human system of faith and morals. Others, again, have earnestly maintained that Non-Subscription is not to be confounded with non-belief, but is to be understood as an acknowledgment of the Divine Revelation contained in the Scriptures, and a refusal to subscribe any authoritative interpretation of these Scriptures drawn up by their fellowmen. The one party alleges that the principle of Non-Subscription, under whose banner the liberal Protestant Churches are marshalled, secures to those who may minister in them liberty, not only to interpret the Scriptures as the records of Divine Truth, according to the best of their ability, unrestricted by human confessions and articles of faith, but to reject the authoritative teaching of Scripture altogether, if, on investigation, they are not satisfied of their divine origin. The other party contends for the utmost freedom in interpreting Scripture, but argues that Non-Subscription only gives liberty within the pale of Christianity, not outside of it. Men have a right to reject the authority of the Christian Revelation, if the

evidences for its truth that are presented to their minds are not satisfactory; but, in rejecting the divine in the Christian religion, they forfeit the title of Non-Subscribers.

In endeavouring to ascertain which of these conflicting views is correct, we must admit that the etymology of the term *Non-Subscriber* would lead us to adopt the more liberal and popular interpretation, and say that all are entitled to be called by this honourable appellation who refuse to subscribe the human creeds which churches have imposed, whether they admit or reject the divine element in the Scriptures; whether they believe that Jesus was the divinely-appointed Saviour, or merely a Jewish peasant, superior to his countrymen in goodness, wisdom, and moral courage. But the etymology of a word may sometimes lead us into egregious errors. *Non-juror* literally signifies one who would take no oath; but in order to ascertain its proper meaning, we refer to the time and the circumstances in which it was employed, and we find that its application is restricted to those who, at the period of the Revolution, refused to take a particular oath, viz., the oath of allegiance to those who had deposed the second James. *Total abstainer* might appear to denote one who abstains from everything, or at any rate, from every kind of drink; but we know—for the term has arisen, and is frequently used, in our own time—that it is employed to distinguish those only who abstain from intoxicating drinks. Thus it is plain that to determine the proper meaning of a particular term, it is often necessary to go beyond its etymology, and inquire what was the meaning attached to it by those who introduced or adopted it. If we seek in this way to ascertain the correct meaning of Non-Subscriber, we are at once satisfied of the egregious mistake into which those have fallen who make it an apology for their wildest speculations; and we are constrained to limit it to those who recognize a Divine Revelation in the Scriptures, but claim the right of private judgment in their interpretation, and refuse to subscribe to creeds which have been drawn up by fallible men. To pass over earlier instances in which this hallowed principle of resistance to human creeds was maintained, let us inquire what were the views of Non-Sub-

scription held by those who were the advocates of religious freedom, and the founders of the Antrim Presbytery in the early part of the eighteenth century; for they are our religious ancestors, and it is to the constitution which they established our liberal Presbyterian churches owe their existence and their freedom. From the public documents which the Non-Subscribing ministers drew up at the period of their secession from the General Synod, and from letters and sermons published by some of them, many extracts might be made showing very plainly that they entertained the strongest faith in the divine authority of the Christian Revelation, and the highest reverence for the Holy Scriptures, and that in refusing to subscribe the Westminster or any other human confession, they never dreamed of rejecting whatever doctrines the Word of God plainly taught. In a letter from the Presbytery of Antrim to the congregations under their care, written at Dungannon immediately after their separation (June 28, 1726), and intended to exhibit the views and principles on which they felt themselves constrained to withdraw from Synodical communion, we find the following passage:—

“As we are ministers of Christ, and watch for your souls as those who must give an account, we think ourselves obliged to believe nothing ourselves, and to deliver nothing to you, as a part of the Christian religion, but what is taught in the Holy Scriptures, the perfect rule of faith and Christian obedience. The whole discipline of the Church of Christ, as well as its doctrine and worship, is perfectly and fully described in the Bible. Whatever the Synod, or any others, can prove from thence, we will cheerfully embrace, profess, and practise; and whatever hath no foundation there, we reject it (if imposed on us) as an affront to our Saviour’s authority and wisdom, and an injury to ourselves and our fellow-Christians, as well as to sincere religion.”

Many other passages might be quoted to exhibit the reverence which our Presbyterian ancestors entertained for the Scriptures, but the foregoing may be sufficient to show that, in contending for freedom to interpret the Scriptures, they did not argue for liberty to reject their authority, and yet remain in the Church.

The same views of Non-Subscription were entertained by the ministers who, in 1829, withdrew from the General Synod and formed the Remonstrant Synod of Ulster. Henry Montgomery and John Mitchell, William Porter and

Fletcher Blakely, James Davis, and the other men, good and true, who then fought the battle of religious freedom, sought only for the Church which they established the right of interpreting the Scriptures, not the right of denying them. The religious character of these men should be guarantee enough that they did not contemplate setting up under the name of a Remonstrant or Non-Subscribing Church, an asylum for all free-thinking and impatient spirits that might be willing to join them, no matter what opinions they entertained of Christ or of Christianity. One of those Remonstrant heroes whom we have named, still lives, to testify to the principles which, in retiring from the Synod of Ulster, they entertained; and the character and well-known opinions of the others, still deeply imprinted on the memory of many, should be sufficient to vindicate them from the suspicion of what is, in certain circles, called "a free theology." An unworthy effort has been made to identify two of those who are gone with these extra-liberal principles. The name of James Davis, than whom no man in the Remonstrant or any other Church more sincerely clung to the divine authority of Revelation, or more sensitively shrunk from the thought of scepticism, has been associated with this extravagant theory of religious freedom: but the injury thus offered to the memory of that excellent man will recoil upon those who so rashly and unbecomingly referred to him. Fletcher Blakely, too, has been represented as sanctioning the same advanced principles; but we believe that he held, as firmly as any of his honoured compeers, the acknowledgement of the divine authority of Revelation as the very basis of the church which he earnestly aided to establish. In the discourse which he preached before the Non-Subscribing Association in 1853, we find him thus referring to the Gospel:—

"Strong in the conviction of its divine origin, it nobly asserts its proper dignity, has dared to expose human guilt, and to hold up the mirror of truth before the face of criminality. All its doctrines and precepts come upon us with such a commanding authority, and such a distinctness, that it is as unreasonable to attribute its origin to any other source than God, as it would be to trace the creation of man to human authorship."

Mr. Blakely, in the same discourse, speaks of "Divine Revelation" and "our Divine Master;" and speaking of

those who reject the divine authority of our holy religion, he says—

“Like the frozen snake, which, when revived by attention, turns upon the hand that saved it from perishing, so do unbelievers, after being nourished and enlightened by the Gospel, not only undervalue the volume which brings life and immortality to light, but would have us believe that it is the production of men unaided by heaven.”

But it is enough to point to the Fundamental Principles of the Remonstrant Synod, “deliberately, solemnly, and *unanimously* ratified” by that body at the time of its formation in May, 1830; and, in reply to those who would represent its Non-Subscribing views as wide enough to include those who acknowledge no divine authority in the Scriptures, to quote the very first sentence in its constitution: “*The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the only infallible rule of faith and duty, and contain all knowledge necessary for salvation.*”

Historically, then, the meaning of *Non-Subscriber* is clearly enough defined, and is found to be limited to those who acknowledge the divine in Christianity, but claim the right of interpreting, not denying, the Scriptures for themselves. It would be easy to show, in a similar manner, that *Non-Subscriber* does not mean one who conceals his opinions on the plea that no man has a right to know what he thinks in religious matters,—that his religion is entirely between him and his God. Many extracts might be given from the writings of Haliday and others to prove that while they refused to subscribe the Westminster Confession, and therefore were called Non-Subscribers, they had no idea of concealing their religious opinions, nor did they think that a Presbytery should ordain any candidate without being fully satisfied that he understood the Christian doctrine and was qualified to teach it. Before the separation of the Remonstrants in 1829, some Presbyteries in the General Synod were Subscribing, and some Non-Subscribing,—that is, some required the candidate for license to subscribe the Westminster Confession; and some, as the Presbytery of Bangor, were satisfied to ascertain, by asking questions, whether the candidate understood and acknowledged the Christian doctrine. There was no excessive delicacy then, nor for years after, about answering questions; certainly no ob-

jection on the part of any to acknowledge the divine mission of Christ.

There is need in our time of a New Church, on broader principles than have yet been promulgated—one which shall take as its basis not the Thirty-Nine Articles, nor the Westminster Confession, nor yet the Scriptures themselves, nor even the divine records which the Scriptures contain; but reason and conscience, the light of nature, and the writings of the wise, including "*the good old book.*" Our present Churches, even the freest, are too narrow for the growing enlightenment of the age. Let such a Church be inaugurated, and some may find a freedom in worshipping and ministering there which cannot honestly be enjoyed by any who are only Non-Subscribers.

THE HEAVENLY TREE.

On a hill stands a beautiful tree;
 Its fruit is all golden and fair;
 And its shade and its treasures are free
 For all who may thither repair.
 Its leaves, ever green, do not die;
 Its flowers with fragrance abound;
 Its splendour enraptures the eye;
 Its branches with music resound.

Though thousands by night and by day,
 Have feasted and gathered in store,—
 Have borne its rich bounties away,—
 Its fulness remains evermore.
 Oh! what is its name? who can tell?
 And the hill—where, oh! where can it be?
 By thy side I will haste me to dwell,
 O wonderful, beautiful tree!

On Zion's fair mount you behold
 Its form in bright grandeur arise;
 There glitter its green and its gold,
 There lifts its tall head to the skies.
 'Twas planted by Infinite Love;
 From the hills everlasting it came;
Truth Eternal they call it above,
 But *Bible*, on earth is its name.

THE CHURCH OF THE THREE FIRST CENTURIES.

SECOND NOTICE.

IN our former article we dwelt so long upon Justin and Clement, that we have left ourselves comparatively but little space to refer to the other contents of Dr. Lamson's work; and yet by far the best part remains still to be noticed: for assuredly the interest of the volume centres in "Origen, and his Theology." The author seems here to have felt that he had aimed at the crowning point of his history, and to have put forth all his energies to do justice to his subject; and certainly the article in question exhibits a model of biographical, theological, and critical writing. It is no more, however, than the noble theme required; for of all the figures that appear on the broad canvas of Christian antiquity, Origen, the Adamantine, looms forth upon us, mightiest amongst the mighty; and when we gaze on the great outlines, and see the space he covers in the picture, we feel, indeed, that "there were giants in those days."

His extraordinary talents and soaring genius; the almost superhuman energy, which procured him the title of Adamantius; the vast number, magnitude, and importance of his works; the brilliant reputation he enjoyed during his life, and the intensity of the opposing feelings with which, for ages afterwards, his memory was regarded; the wide extended influence of his views in theology and philosophy upon the Church of his own time, and their perceptible effects upon the thought of succeeding ages even to the present day; the peculiar virtues of his personal character—his early piety and ardent thirst for religious knowledge, his wondrous self-denial and the singleness of his life-long devotion to the cause of Christianity;—all combine to assure us, that in him we behold one of the successors of the apostles in establishing the kingdom of Christ on earth, one of the very greatest lights that ever shone in the firmament of the Christian heaven.

Fortunately, the materials for the life of this great man are abundant, as those regarding Justin Martyr and Clement are scanty and incomplete; and of these Dr. L.'s

readers will admit that he has made a copious and satisfactory use.

We are still "in the land of the Pyramids and the Nile," still at Alexandria, the birthplace of Origen and the scene of his earlier trials, his education under Clement and the philosophers, his labours, and his fame; till driven into exile by the malice of his enemies, envious of his increasing renown. Born A.D. 185, his very childhood exhibited that patience of labour, inquisitive spirit, and ardour, that marked the future man; which led Jerome to call him "a great man from his infancy." "His father, Leonidas, an earnest Christian, gave his son a thorough literary education, instructing him in the rudiments of the sciences, but especially directing his attention to a study of the Scriptures, a portion of which he every day committed to memory, often perplexing his father with deep questions about the sense. For this the father made show of chiding him, and told him he must remain satisfied with the plain and obvious meaning of what he read, and not engage in researches beyond his years. But the overflowings of parental affection could not be repressed: and the happy father, restrained by a sense of duty to his child from manifesting all he felt, was accustomed to avail himself of the opportunity, while he slept, of repairing to his couch, and, bending over him, he would kiss his breast, in reverence for the divine spirit which lay enshrined there."

It would be impossible, in the bounds of a brief notice like the present, to enter into the details of the life and labours of Origen. No doubt they are well known to many of our readers, and ought to be familiar to them all.

Passing over the records of his youth, his burning zeal and courage, his rapid and extensive acquisition of knowledge, his appointment, in his eighteenth year, to the Catechetical Chair, or presidency of the Christian School at Alexandria, vacant by the exile of his former instructor, Clement, during a time of fearful persecution; his extraordinary success and popularity as a teacher, his years of rigid asceticism and self-mortification, from a misapprehension of the Gospel precepts, his study of philosophy under Ammonius Saccas, which so largely

influenced his subsequent speculations, and his journey to Rome, "to see the most ancient church of the Romans,"—we come to the time when, we are told, "he devoted himself with great ardour to the study of the sacred writings, and, as a preparatory step, set about acquiring a knowledge of the Hebrew language. He is mentioned as the earliest of the Fathers who attempted to obtain an acquaintance with this language; and by "what he did in it," says Jerome, "he acquired a fame all over Greece." The taste of his nation and age opposed a barrier to acquisitions of this sort. The Hebrew language and literature bore among the Greeks the epithet *barbaric*; but Origen had the courage to despise the silly prejudices of the times. With him originated what has since been called the science of Biblical Criticism. The Greek version of the Seventy, as it was called, was to Christians of his time what the English version of King James's translators is to common Christians of the present day. But errors had crept into the text, and Origen applied his knowledge of Hebrew to the very laudable purpose of removing them, and hence, in process of time, came the greatest of his works, the "Hexapla," or Polyglott Bible, as it may be termed, one of the most noble monuments of human industry which his or any age has ever given to the world. The subsequent loss of this valuable work, in the destruction of the library of Caesarea by the Saracens, must ever be a subject of regret to all biblical students. Only some scattered fragments of it have been preserved in Eusebius and other authors.

The fame of Origen was now waxing very great. Not only was he surrounded by multitudes of hearers and disciples, embracing heretics, Pagans, and Gentile philosophers, as well as Christians,—for, in addition to divinity, he taught philosophy, geometry, mathematics, and all branches of secular learning,—but he was also sent for on several occasions, to distant provinces, to decide, by the weight of his eloquence and arguments alone, certain important controversies that had arisen in the Church. The amount of work accomplished by him at that time seems almost incredible. His friend and convert, Ambrose, "devoted his wealth to his service in the purchase of manuscripts. He also furnished him with more than

seven scribes, to relieve each other as his amanuenses, and as many others, besides girls, to transcribe, in a fair hand, what the first had hastily written from dictation." In a letter, he says himself, that "the collation of manuscripts left him no time to eat, and that, after meals, he could neither go out nor enjoy a season of rest. Even the night, he says, was not granted him for repose. His mind was tasked every hour. Along with the collation and correction of manuscripts, he was writing Commentaries on the Old and New Testaments, and producing various other works;" amongst others, that entitled, "Of Principles,"—a mixture of Christian truth, with many wild philosophical speculations or Platonic extravagances, which afterwards occasioned him much trouble, and which he himself, on subsequent reflection, strongly disapproved. How pigmy, in these days of steam presses and cheap literature, "with all appliances and means to boot," appears the book-making of the most prolific modern writers, compared with the gigantic labours and iron diligence of this hero of antiquity!

But he had now to experience the too common reward of a benefactor of humanity. Demetrius, Bishop of Alexandria, jealous of his renown, took occasion of his having been ordained Presbyter in Palestine without his consent, to assemble a synod of his own Presbyters and other Egyptian Bishops, and through them to deprive Origen of the rank of Presbyter, and expel him for ever from the office of teacher in the Alexandrian Church. Origen takes refuge with his friends in Palestine, and Demetrius, under pretence of heresies contained in his "De Principiis," assembles a large synod, who cut off Origen from the communion of the Church, and issued against him a violent invective.

"Behold now," continues Dr. L., "the most celebrated scholar, biblical critic, and commentator of his times,—who knew more than all his persecutors combined, and performed more labour in the cause of Christianity than any dozen of them put together,—behold him now an excommunicated man! His heresy serveth well enough as a pretext; but it was not the cause of his persecution at this time. Hear what the very learned and orthodox Jerome says on the subject, about a hundred and fifty

years after his death. Alluding to the proceedings against him at Alexandria, he says that he was condemned, 'not on account of the novelty of his dogmas; not on account of heresy, for which he is *now* barked at by the rabid dogs; but because they could not endure the fame of his eloquence and learning.' "

Of Origen's subsequent career,—his life at Caesarea, where, protected by the Palestinian Bishops, he long continued preaching, and, as in Egypt, gathered around him numbers of attached disciples, who afterwards became distinguished teachers in the Church; his several journeys to Asia Minor, Greece, Arabia; his daily discourses, or Homilies, more than a thousand in number; his extensive *Tomes* or Commentaries on every book of Scripture; his *Scholia*, or Illustrations; his *Stromata*, *De Principiis*, *Hexapla*, Eight Books against Celsus, &c. &c.—we cannot now write more at length. His works, of which by far the greater number have perished, were said to have numbered from four thousand to six thousand volumes. "All Greek and Roman authors," says Jerome, "were surpassed by the labours of this one. Who," he asks, "can read so much as he wrote?"

Origen was not allowed to finish his days in peace. When sixty-five years old, during the Decian persecution, he was chained in a dungeon, and subjected to the utmost tortures, short of death, on the rack, though afterwards released. "Worn out with years, toil, and sufferings, he sunk quietly to rest at Tyre, at the age, says Eusebius, of sixty-nine years (A.D. 254)." Of his character, Dr. Lamson remarks—"He was regarded by multitudes with extravagant fondness; yet amid the marks of flattering attention which he was daily receiving, he appears to have retained, in a remarkable degree, his natural simplicity and modesty. He was pursued in his lifetime, as was his memory after death, by envy and hate; he was abused, anathematised, and exiled, but seems to have contracted no bitterness or misanthropy of feeling. If it be the lot of few to experience, to an equal extent, the extremes of adulation and censure, few will be found to exhibit brighter examples of moderation and self-command. Of the amenity of his disposition, his blandness and winning address, his history and writings afford

abundant evidence. His piety cannot be questioned, though he has never been allowed to bear the title of Saint in the Roman Calendar; and the question has been seriously debated, whether he won heaven by his merits, or was doomed to the penal fires of hell for his errors! Such are human folly and absurdity! He led a life of uncommon sanctity and abstemiousness, treading under foot the wealth and pleasures of earth, and leaving monuments of zeal, diligence, and constancy, which will endure while the religion he laboured to defend and illustrate has an abode in the world."

As a theologian, critic, and expositor, he possessed great merits and great defects; amongst the latter the most prominent was his inordinate love for allegorical and mystical interpretation. This, with the habit, common in his day, of mingling philosophical speculations with the truths of revealed religion, has greatly contributed to dim the lustre and mar the usefulness of his otherwise unequalled works. "Yet with all his extravagances, there was that in him which wins our love and reverence; and his pages may still both delight and instruct. 'I acquire more knowledge of Christian philosophy,' says Erasmus, 'from one page of Origen, than from ten of Augustine.'"

Let us turn now, as briefly as may be, to the remaining contents of Dr. Lamson's volume. "Arius, and the Arian Controversy." "There is a lull; but the calm is soon to end; the sky is to be darkened, and the winds are to be up. A stern conflict is commencing in the theological world,—the old world of the Fathers. Opinions are to be sifted, examined, defined; the past is to be questioned; new ideas are to be thrown out, new controversies to arise. The old ways are to be forsaken, and untrodden paths to be tried. Arius and Athanasius—resolute spirits both—are to come upon the stage. The head of the Roman Empire is to become Christian, and to mediate, and mediate in vain. The wound is never to be healed. Antiquity is to be appealed to, and its opinions are to go down, so far as authority can crush them; and dogmas, unknown to the Fathers, are to be enthroned in human belief."

As it is our intention to reserve for another article

our notice of the *theological* discussion here alluded to, we shall not enter at present minutely into the life of Arius, which necessarily involves it, and which is, besides, more familiar to the generality of readers than that of his predecessors.

We shall content ourselves with the following extracts from the pages of Dr. Lamson :—

The first describes the personal appearance of Arius—
 “He was of tall stature, of a grave or even melancholy expression. He wore a sort of short cloak and a scanty tunic, resembling that adopted by the monks; and, with an air of unusual seriousness, united a bland address, and assiduous and flattering attentions. He was evidently sincere. He abounded in zeal, and was susceptible neither of being intimidated by threats, nor lured by favour. He possessed the courage of a martyr; and sooner than profess his assent to opinions he did not believe, he would ‘die,’ as he says in his letter to Eusebius, ‘a thousand deaths.’”

The second is the account taken from Eusebius’ “Life of Constantine,” of the confluence of Bishops to the Council of Nice, and the appearance of the Emperor on the occasion.

“When the Emperor’s order was brought into all the provinces, all persons set out as it were from some goal, and ran with all alacrity; for the hope of good things drew them, and the participation of peace, and the spectacle of a new miracle; to wit, the sight of so great an Emperor. When, therefore, they were all come together, that which was done appeared to be the work of God; for they who were at the greatest distance one from another, not only in minds, but in bodies, regions, places, and provinces, were seen assembled together in one place; and one city received them all, as it were some vast garland of priests, made up of a variety of beautiful flowers. . . . When the day for the opening of the Council arrived, they assembled in the middlemost edifice of the palace, where seats were placed on both sides of the room. Each of them took an agreeable seat. Then all is silence, in expectancy of the Emperor. His heralds precede him. At a signal given, they all rise, and the Emperor himself comes walking in like some celestial angel of God, shining with his bright purple garment, as it were with the splendour of light, glistening with

flaming rays, and adorned with the clear brightness of gold and precious stones. Such was the attire of his body. But his mind excelled all. He was adorned with a fear and reverence of God. He cast down his eyes with a blushing countenance; and by his gait and motion, manifested his modesty and humility. In tallness of stature, he surpassed all who were about him, as also in a magnificent gracefulness of body, and in an invincible strength and might. He moved majestically on to the upper end of the hall, and remained standing, till a low chair made of gold being placed before him, the bishops beckoned him to be seated. Eusebius gives his opening speech, very flattering and complimentary to the bishops." It must not be forgotten that Eusebius was a consummate courtier, as well as a lively historian.

We may not linger on this really masterly sketch of Arius and his Controversy. We commend it to the perusal of all readers.

Of the following chapters, devoted to Eusebius, the most valuable is that which critically assigns his place, and measures his credit, as a historian. The treatise on the Apostles' and other early Creeds, being necessarily theological, we reserve for our next notice. The "Hymnology of the Ancient Church" is a subject with which the recent discussion between certain eminent writers in the "Christian Reformer" has made the readers of that periodical tolerably familiar. Nevertheless, Dr. Lamson's work throws great additional light, and in a more popular direction, on this matter of increasing interest in the Christian Church.

Two curious chapters next succeed on the Remains of Ancient Christian Art, as exponents of the theology of the period. They are chiefly taken from the work of M. Didron on the subject, and are devoted to prove that no evidence of the Trinity, as a doctrine held by the early Church, can be gathered from such remains, which are strongly conclusive of the opposite view.

It is too much to say that Dr. L. has kept the best of his work to the last; yet assuredly his concluding treatise on the "Festivals of the Ancient Christians," is not the least interesting and useful portion of the volume.

The information which it gives regarding Sunday, or the Lord's day, the primitive annual festivals of Easter and Pen-

tecost, and those of Christmas and Epiphany of later date, with the times and modes of their celebration, should remove many errors on these subjects; and impartially read, as it seems to have been written, should tend to dispel some, at least, of the prejudices with which, in the eyes of too many Christians, these festivals have been long regarded.

On the whole, we thank Dr. Lamson for his admirable historical sketch of a period, to us the most important in the annals of the Christian Church. We must defer, however, to the next number our promised review of the *theological doctrines* specially discussed in this work.

C.

 EVENING.

SLOWLY by thy hand unfurled,
Down around the weary world
Falls the darkness. Oh, how still
Is the working of thy will!

Mighty Maker! here am I,
Work in me as silently,
Veil the day's distracting sights,
Show me Heaven's eternal lights.

From the darkened sky come forth
Countless stars. A wondrous birth!
So may gleams of glory dart
From this dim abyss, my heart.

Living worlds to view be brought
In the boundless realms of thought;
High and infinite desires,
Flaming like those upper fires.

Holy Truth, Eternal Right,
Let them break upon my sight;
Let them shine, serene and still,
And with light my being fill.

Thou who dwellest there, I know,
Dwellest here within me too;
May the perfect peace of God,
Here, as there, be shed abroad.—W. H. FURNESS.

VISIT TO AN ENGLISH REFORMATORY.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE CHRISTIAN UNITARIAN."

DEAR SIR,—Some of your readers, who have not had an opportunity of seeing a Reformatory Institution, may feel interested in a brief account of "a visit" recently made to "the Colony," a place of reception and instruction for male juvenile offenders, in Charnwood Forest, Leicestershire. It is under Catholic management, of course with the sanction of the Government, and is near to the celebrated Bernardine Monastery. Though the surrounding country yet bears the name of "the Forest," it is bare of wood, save a plantation here and there, being a bleak and somewhat sterile tract extending several miles, slightly elevated rugged masses of very dark granite cropping up from the surface of the soil on all sides. At the Conquest, and long subsequent to it, the land, now so bare and stony, was thickly covered with trees, giving shelter to numerous herds of deer, and rearing bands of hardy archers. "I must see," Scott makes Locksley say to Prince John in "Ivanhoe," "how Staffordshire and Leicestershire can draw their bows; Needwood and Charnwood must rear good archers." A situation for the peculiar purpose of the Institution established there could hardly have been better chosen, whilst it is equally adapted by its seclusion to the wants and feelings of the good monks, who delight in solitary places, and by whose very praiseworthy exertions the desert has literally been made to blossom as the rose. They have built a fine abbey for themselves; and during the last thirty years have laboured assiduously to make the rough places plain. The gardens are beautifully kept, and the lands around brought under a state of high cultivation. Before we leave the monastery must be noticed a high and bold rock near it—popularly termed "the Calvary." On the summit is a large cross, which, from its size and elevation, can be seen at a considerable distance. On it is suspended a figure of our Lord as large as life—the head crowned with thorns, and the whole frame wearing the appearance of intense agony. Though very imposing, the semblance is too near reality to be pleasing. But pleasurable asso-

ciations seem to be banished from the place and system. The monks are Cistercians, and of a very severe order. They pride themselves on carrying out the rule of St. Bernard to the letter. The dress of coarse woollen; meagre fare and frequent fasting; long vigils; constrained, almost unbroken, silence; the natural promptings of humanity studiously suppressed; yet the "guest-master," who accompanied our party—a young man of polished and most agreeable manners—assured us that the conventual life was most happy,—freed from earth, its business, and its snares; and yet, he added, "not losing our love for our brethren yet in the world—aiming to do them good." We could not for a moment question his sincerity; yet he had not then taken the full vows, though he purposed doing so at the expiration of his novitiate. We could not help fancying—though we might be mistaken—"that, spite of himself, his convictions, and resolutions, the world yet claimed a corner in his heart." Few can bury themselves in monastic seclusion without casting "one longing, lingering look behind."

The Reformatory is within what is called a short mile from the Abbey, and is a very large building, or rather series of connected buildings, covering a large area; substantial and comfortable, without any architectural pretensions. The central front is of considerable height, but the northern aspect gives chillness to the whole. The whole is replete with convenience, having, however, a certain conventual air; yet the appearance of the inmates is very, and most strikingly, different from that of the fathers in their neighbourhood, whose sole business would seem to be to mortify the flesh and detach themselves from the things of earth. Indeed, our conductor at the monastery rather complained that the superintendence his brethren were compelled to exercise over the Reformatory interfered with their duties at home. The chief burden of religious instruction falls on a secular priest, who, we understood, was unremitting in his attention to his youthful charge, and we cannot but hope his pious and benevolent efforts for their benefit will prove abundantly successful. It is surely something to bring these poor fallen boys under religious influences; and all honour be to the good men, Catholic or Protestant,

who labour on, under all discouragements, to bring the wandering back to the fold. The boys are under a kind of military discipline, having officers over them promoted from the ranks. They parade and have a band, the musicians taken from themselves. The entrance door was opened to us by a lad wearing two stripes on his right sleeve. He desired us to sign the visitors' book, asking, at the same time, for a small contribution to the funds of the Institution. He then passed us over to the care of a superior officer, very young also, who led us first to the refectory. Here the boys were leaving table. The matron, who had been superintending dinner, took us to the kitchen, dairy, and bakery. In each of these places we found boys employed in various ways under her direction. She spoke most highly of the general deportment of the youths as being most docile and amiable, remarking they were far too well taken care of and too happy to dream of running away, though no outward obstacles existed to their doing so. Indeed their smiling faces justified her eulogium. All looked well fed and robust, with fine full eyes. They have meat three or four times a week, with bread of a good quality as much as they can eat. They were comfortably, though very plainly, indeed meanly, clothed. The shoes and stockings, with most of the other articles of dress, are made in the establishment, and by the boys themselves under able instructors.

The dinner hour having expired, we saw the lads, under their serjeants and corporals, marched to their several occupations. Each young official wore a blue cotton tunic over his dress. Our friend, himself a serjeant, was now at liberty to take us over the other parts of the building. The lavatory is well fitted up, with about seventy white basins fixed in stone troughs, having a brass tap to each, with a constant supply of pure water. The dormitories are also well arranged, spacious, light, and airy; each boy has a bed on an iron frame to himself. Between two and three hundred are thus accommodated. A monitor rings them up, winter and summer, for mass in the chapel at six. Mass ended, they are dismissed to their various occupations; some at trades, others at farm and out-door labour, whilst school instruction is constantly

afforded. In the school-room a monitor was giving a gallery lesson,—the subject, the commandment,—“Thou shalt not steal—Why must we not steal.” The reply was drowned in the shout of many voices; but it is to be hoped will prove effective to the conscience. As for breaches of this commandment, many of them were then there. The walls of the workroom were decorated with pictures and images of the saints. In the shoemaking department a large painted inscription called on the inmates to glorify their patron, St. Crispin. It reminded us of the words put by Shakespeare into the mouth of Henry the Fifth—

“This day is called the feast of Crispian;
He that outlives this day and comes safe home,
Will stand a tip-toe when this day is named,
And rouse him at the name of Crispian.”

Our conductor, who was a youth of mild and engaging deportment, and who spoke in a subdued tone throughout, told us that his time to stay in the reformatory was nearly expired. He expected to go to London under the care of a Catholic clergyman who had been most kind to him. He appeared to be thoroughly repentant of past misconduct. We assured him that he had it quite in his own power, and by divine assistance, to retrieve his character and position, and thus become a respectable member of society. Here, however, is the trial, and it is a very great and sore one. The great majority of the boys are, as a matter of necessity, lost sight of on quitting the Institution. Neither society nor individuals can look after them as they once more launch out into the world. They are again thrown on their own resources, and, however honestly disposed at the moment of their departure, innumerable temptations will immediately beset them. Seldom have they any friends who care for them, or who, if yet caring, have it in their power to set them up again in life, and hence many, it is to be feared, will again fall. Still, if but a few can be saved, it is so much clear gain, and we must do what we can to restore *one* such. Nor would it be for the ultimate advantage of society, that all these young persons should, as they grow older, and are discharged from confinement, continue under Government surveillance. To secure our liberties, our inestimable

personal freedom, we must be left, in a great measure, to ourselves, and so must we leave others. Some risk must be run. The true remedy lies with us more than with any Government, or with that stalking-horse, Society. Let each man do his best to leave the world better than he found it. Let each one strive to mend one, each seeking not his own but another's good; the world would then be at peace, all would be love; violence, fraud, and all ill would cease for ever.—Yours respectfully,

T. B.

OUR RECENT MEETINGS.

THE recent meetings of the Remonstrant Synod and the Non-Subscribing Association were characterized by a spirit of harmony and good feeling, which was most gratifying. Various circumstances which had occurred in the course of the past year had caused just apprehension that there might be very stormy debates, and that principles which, in minor meetings, had been warmly discussed, might be re-argued in the larger assemblies. Such apprehensions, however, were not realized; all was peace and mutual forbearance; no angry word was uttered. There were discussions on several resolutions, but all conducted without heat, and without those personal attacks which threw the most bitter element into former debates. On one point, almost at the beginning of the proceedings of the Association, an angry controversy seemed imminent. Two gentlemen appeared as Elders from the Congregation of Ballyclare,—one appointed by the Session and Committee in the ordinary and regular way, the other nominated by a small portion of the Congregation, convened, as far as we could learn, without any regular notice. Which was to be received? By the principles of the Association, no notice could be taken of matters pertaining to the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the constituent bodies, and one congregation, not being a collegiate charge, was thus represented in the Association by *two Elders*.

The most interesting and impressive occurrence was the unanimous appointment of Dr. Montgomery to the office of President. Another gentleman had been nomi-

nated, but with good taste he begged that his name should be withdrawn; and the venerable champion of Non-Subscription, who, for more than thirty years, has been the able, eloquent, and, we will add, consistent advocate of religious freedom, took the Presidential chair amid the hearty plaudits of the Assembly. To those who remembered his powerful pleadings and his indefatigable labours in behalf of our free Church, who knew that to him the Remonstrant Synod, in a great measure, owed not its privileges merely, but its very existence, aided, as indeed he was, by other good and able men, of whom, however, he was not, as has been most ungenerously insinuated, the mouthpiece merely, but the eloquent and heroic leader; to those who knew how the English Unitarian press has latterly misrepresented and maligned him, not because he had betrayed the principles of Christian freedom, but because he would not be dragged through all the mazes of "free thought" into which they would lead; and to those who knew how, even in the Church which he had been mainly instrumental in forming, and over which he has ever watched with an anxious and disinterested care, there have been some weak and ungrateful enough to assail him with unmerited abuse, it was peculiarly gratifying to see this great man placed at the head of the Association amid the warm applause of the meeting. It was a merited testimony to his worth, and the best reply to those who allege that he has forfeited the confidence of the liberal Presbyterians. It proved that he is regarded not merely as "the glorious Henry Montgomery of 'Twenty-Nine,'" but the "glorious Henry Montgomery" still; as earnest as in his earlier days in behalf of Christian freedom, and as willing to devote his great powers for its maintenance and extension.

Several of the ministers who, by their secession from the Presbytery of Antrim, had ceased to be members of the Association, applied to be recognized in their new Presbytery as a constituent branch of it. When the Moderator of the Northern Presbytery of Antrim, bearing the honoured name of Bruce, rose, and on behalf of himself and his brethren sought to be acknowledged as in connexion with the Association, alleging that they held the same principles of Non-Subscription which they had

ever done, the request was at once complied with,—one of the gentlemen who had accused them of violating the principles of Non-Subscription being the first to move that they should be recognized as members of the Non-Subscribing Association.

There was reason to expect that an interesting discussion would have arisen in the Remonstrant Synod in reference to the Questions in the Code, and the alteration which had been proposed at a peace convention in March. It appeared, however, that even the “one question,” if adopted, was not likely to meet the views of all, and therefore it was wisely agreed that no good result would arise from its discussion in open Synod. If we have been correctly informed, there are some members of the Synod very ready to charge their brethren with violating its principles, who themselves object to the very first sentence in its constitution—viz., “That the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the only Infallible Rule of Faith and Duty.”

Late proceedings fill the minds of many with the fond expectation that our unseemly contentions are over, and that that peace which is the end of all war has begun. We confess that we cannot entertain such a hope. The proceedings of the Association may still be harmonious; in it the several bodies are united for several purposes,—as the protection of their common rights and the promotion of educational and humane objects, in which they have a common interest. But in their ecclesiastical principles they widely differ. One party requires candidates for ordination to give an explicit statement of their belief in the Divine authority of the Christian Revelation; the other makes no such requirement, even the “discipleship” test,—a poor enough one,—having been thrown aside. We do not mean that the latter party do not themselves believe in a Divine Revelation, but, simply, that they do not require such a belief from those whom they would ordain. While in this important matter they are divided, there cannot be cordial co-operation; they differ on the very fundamental principle of Christianity. Better to have “peace in division” than “strife in union;” and if there are still in the Remonstrant Synod those who would not require candidates for ordination to receive the Scrip-

tures as being the only sufficient rule of faith, and as containing a Divine Revelation, they would consult their own comfort and the best interests of the Church, by moving over to any other body that may offer ease to a tender conscience.

AN ELDER'S PROTEST.

It is always gratifying to record expressions of kindness and liberality on the part of congregations towards their ministers; and we have, therefore, pleasure in inserting in our Intelligence department a brief notice of a recent presentation in Banbridge. Apart from the views he has adopted on matters of dispute, we believe the Rev. D. Gordon to be a generous and upright man, a diligent pastor, and a zealous friend of education and human progress. We regret, indeed, that a large portion of his congregation should approve of the course which he felt it his duty to take in connexion with the disruption of the Presbytery of Antrim, and can only account for their doing so by supposing that they were carried away with images ingeniously conjured up of "ambitious human dictation" and "incipient creeds." It is unfortunate, however, that the name of the late Rev. James Davis should have been introduced as it was, to give countenance to the views of Religious Liberty which Mr. Gordon and his friends have endorsed. It seems particularly strange that the chairman of the meeting, who was formerly a minister in connexion with the Remonstrant Synod, had enjoyed frequent intercourse with Mr. Davis, and must have been familiar with his religious views, could have countenanced, and apparently concurred in the allusions which were made to him. The following letter, which we have received from a gentleman who was long an Elder in the Banbridge Congregation, and was Mr. Davis's most intimate friend, protests, with becoming spirit, against the unjustifiable use that has been made of a name still cherished in grateful memory by the people of Banbridge:—

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CHRISTIAN UNITARIAN.

DEAR SIR,—I have read in the *Northern Whig* of the 12th of this month, the report of an address and presentation from some members of the 2nd Non-Subscribing Congregation of Banbridge,

to their minister, the Rev. D. Gordon. The address, as reported, contains the following paragraph :—

“We desire to record our high appreciation of the noble stand which you, with others, have recently made in defence of the great principles of Religious Liberty and Non-Subscription.

“We were rejoiced to find that you were not deterred by the old, and, to us, well understood cry of heresy and infidelity, from supporting the principles of 1726 and 1829, principles so powerfully enunciated in the celebrated Remonstrance prepared by our much-loved and highly-gifted minister, the late Rev. James Davis, and adopted by his associates as their expression of opinion against the usurpation of ecclesiastical authority and ambitious human dictation.”

The reply to this portion of the address is reported as follows :—

“I do trust that I shall never be forgetful of your friendly support, but especially would I remember your warm sympathy towards me and my brethren in our recent struggle against incipient creeds and inquisitions, and for the sacred cause of religious freedom. I believe that in that we were, in principle, with the men of 1726, and with the much-loved and highly-gifted James Davis and his associates, lay and clerical, of 1829.”

It appears to me that the real question at issue between the Northern Presbytery of Antrim and the Residuary Presbytery, in their recent struggle, was this :—Would a minister be justified in licensing or ordaining a candidate to preach the Gospel, without being satisfied, by questions asked, or by a voluntary declaration, of his belief that the Scriptures contain a Divine Revelation. The Christian liberty contended for by the men of 1726, and their successors in 1829, is in no respect restricted, but unquestionably extended, by this simple requirement; it involves no submission to “ecclesiastical authority or ambitious human dictation,” still less has it any reference to “incipient creeds,” nor does it contain one syllable hostile to the sacred cause of religious liberty.

The man, or body of men, who “rejected with indignation” this declaration of belief in the fundamental doctrine of Christianity being required from candidates previous to license or ordination, have no right to insult the memory of the much-loved and highly-gifted James Davis, by claiming to be, in principle, with him in the course they pursued during the recent proceedings in the Presbytery of Antrim.

I had the privilege of being the intimate friend of Mr. Davis for many years, and was one of his elders in the large, influential, and united congregation over which this good and faithful servant of his Divine Master so long presided. I stood by his side in many difficulties and trials which he lived to surmount; I know well the honest, independent Christian principle which influenced every action of his life, and I have no hesitation in declaring, that so far from sanctioning the admission into the ministry of any candidate who, from any motive, or under any pretext, refused to declare his belief in the Divine authority of Christianity, he would have been conscientiously rejected by Mr. Davis, as altogether unfit for the sacred office.—I am, Sir, yours respectfully,

CLIFDEN, HOLYWOOD, July 21, 1862.

JOHN FINLAY.

THE "BOSTON CHRISTIAN REGISTER" AND THE "CHRISTIAN UNITARIAN."

THE following extract from the columns of the *Boston Christian Register* of June 21, will sufficiently explain and refute a short paragraph unjustly reflecting on our magazine, which had inadvertently found its way into that respectable journal, and was triumphantly paraded in the *London Inquirer* as an index of American feeling in our recent discussions. The readiness with which the Editor of the *Register* makes amends for an injury unintentionally inflicted is most creditable to him, while the assurance that his paper is still the organ and advocate of Christian principles must be very gratifying to the friends of Unitarian Christianity in this country.

"THE 'CHRISTIAN UNITARIAN,' BELFAST, IRELAND.

"In the *Register* of March 29, we published, without particular examination, the following brief article furnished by a valued friend, who occasionally sends us literary notices,—entirely unconscious that we were publishing anything expressing censure of any of our brethren:—

"‘The *Christian Unitarian* is a new monthly magazine published in Belfast, designed to be the organ of the intolerant party among the so called Non-Subscribing Presbyterians.’

"We regret to learn, by the Rev. Mr. M‘Alester’s letter, which we now publish, that the article has given much dissatisfaction and pain to the respected Editor of *The Unitarian*:—

"TO THE EDITOR OF THE 'CHRISTIAN REGISTER.'

"‘SIR,—For more than five and twenty years I have been accustomed more or less regularly to see your paper, and I have gathered from its columns not only important intelligence respecting the operations of the Unitarian Church in America, but also various arguments in defence of the divine authority of the Christian Revelation, and in favour of our denominational views in its interpretation. I was therefore not a little surprised to see a paragraph lately in the *London Inquirer*, quoted from the *Register*, to the effect that the *Christian Unitarian*, of which I am the Editor, ‘was the organ of the intolerant party among the so called Non-Subscribing Presbyterians in Belfast;’ and I am pained to find, by reference to your number of March 29, that the quotation was correctly made.

"‘In your controversies with other churches, and possibly with sections of your own denomination, you have perhaps found yourself at times misrepresented, and I trust that a fellow-feeling will lead you to allow me a small space, in order to show that, unintentionally I am sure, you have misrepresented myself and the brethren with whom in the recent agitations I have sympathized. It is unhappily true, that in the Unitarian denomination here and in England, and in your own country also, there are two parties. One of these does not require from those who undertake the im-

portant and responsible duties of a Christian minister any acknowledgment of Christ's divine mission, or of the divine authority of the Christian Revelation; so that men may be appointed to the office of the ministry in the Unitarian Church who see no divine mission in Christ and no divine authority in the Gospel. The other party, while they freely admit the right of every congregation to select such a teacher as they may see fit,—Trinitarian or Unitarian, Christian or Deist,—decline to authorize by any act of theirs the appointment of those who do not acknowledge the Saviour's divine mission; and in their endeavours to spread the Gospel, they refuse to co-operate with those who see no more authority in its revelations than they do in the Dialogues of Plato or the poetry of John Milton. In other objects they are most willing to unite with them—as in efforts for the promotion of temperance, education, and political and religious freedom; but you will, I hope, yourself admit the inconsistency of uniting for the spread and establishment of our divine faith, with those whose principles drag it down to the level of mere Deism. Those who differ from us so widely have the same right to their opinions as we to ours; but you will not surely denounce us as "intolerant" because we differ from them, and endeavour to guard and uphold principles from which they, we doubt not, most conscientiously dissent. Was the party of Unitarians in Cincinnati intolerant, who some years ago withdrew from the ministry of Mr. Conway, and formed themselves into a different church? Were the Boston ministers intolerant who, earlier still, declined to co-operate with Theodore Parker in religious matters, while between him and them there was so wide a difference? For sake of a seeming liberality are men to abandon cherished principles, and make common cause with those who would undermine the most precious truths of revelation? Were you, Sir, in past years intolerant, when you contended for the divine authority of revelation, and indignantly repelled the insinuations of your Trinitarian opponents—that Unitarians regarded the blessed Saviour as a mere man and nothing more? Have you now been carried on by the rising tide of Parkerism and unbelief, so that you are ready to stigmatize as intolerant those who hold the very same principles for the maintenance of which the *Boston Register* since its establishment almost to the present day has been conspicuous? Sir, I hope better things of you. I believe that you have been misled by the pictures—egregiously deceptive they are—which the *London Inquirer* and the *Manchester Herald* have drawn of the intolerance of certain persons here, whom they modestly designate as "the Belfast Inquisitors," and that when you have your attention drawn to the facts of the case, you will retract the unjust opinion to which you have rashly given expression.—I am, Sir, yours respectfully,

"C. J. M'ALESTER.

"*Holywood, Co. Down, May 23, 1862.*"

"Taking the brief article which contained the offensive expression as the deliberate utterance of the Editor,—and not, as it was, one of the accidental, objectionable paragraphs which all editors have sometimes to regret—it is not strange that our correspondent

should have been disturbed. A public journal is certainly accountable for wrong done by mistake, as well as by intention, though the degree of fault is determined by the motive.

"Of the merits of the controversy referred to by our correspondent, by the expression 'the recent agitation,' we had formed no opinion. Not having read the articles on either side, we were of course as unprepared as indisposed to express any opinion on which side the 'intolerance' existed, if on either. And we were entirely unconscious that any such suggestion had appeared in the *Register*."

"Having, through inadvertence, permitted the publication of the offensive paragraph, we in duty to ourselves make this explanation, and make amends as far as we may for any injustice to our brethren abroad, by publishing the letter inserted above."

"The brief paragraph referred to being the only basis of complaint, and of what seems to us the uncalled-for suggestion of our correspondent, that the *Register* had 'been carried on by the rising tide of Parkerism and unbelief,' &c., we must deem the explanation given above, and a reference to the editorial columns of the paper—not only 'almost,' but quite up to 'the present day,'—as sufficient to render any disclaimer on this score quite superfluous."

INTELLIGENCE.

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE REMONSTRANT SYNOD OF ULSTER.

THE Annual Meeting of this Synod was held in Comber, on Tuesday, July 15th. The outgoing Moderator, the Rev. H. Alexander, introduced the proceedings with devotional exercises, and preached an able and appropriate discourse from 1 Cor. i. 1, 2.

After the roll was called, the Rev. Joseph M'Fadden, Ballymoney, was unanimously elected Moderator. Rev. J. A. Crozier (Ballymena), who had been appointed clerk at a special meeting of Synod, in consequence of the Rev. David Maginnis having ceased to be in connexion with the Synod, was elected to the office, and the Rev. John Orr (Comber) was unanimously elected to the office of assistant-clerk.

The Revs. J. S. Porter, C. J. M'Alister, Clisson Porter and D. Maginnis, being present were invited to sit and deliberate with the Synod.

Mr. J. S. PORTER thanked his brethren for inviting him to sit with them; he felt a deep interest in their body, and entirely sympathized with its free and Christian principles, but, as he understood that questions might be brought forward affecting the constitution of their Church, he felt that it would be more becoming in him to stand aloof from the deliberations and discussions that might arise.

Mr. M'Alister, and Mr. C. Porter, for similar reasons, declined to sit. Mr. Maginnis accepted the invitation.

The CLERK then proceeded to read the minutes of the annual meeting of 1861, and the several matters arising therefrom were considered in their order. In reading that portion of the Minutes which referred to the Templepatrick Presbytery, a report was given in from the Commission which had had charge of the Carrick-

fergus Congregation, from which it appeared that the Rev. J. N. Porter had resigned charge of the congregation in October last; that a poll was taken for his re-election in January; that there was not a synodical majority for his appointment, and that since that time the Commission had regularly supplied the congregation with preaching.

No commissioner appeared from Carrickfergus.

The Rev. J. MONTGOMERY thought that the Congregation should be now restored to the Presbytery of Templepatrick.

The Rev. R. CAMPBELL thought that the Commission should be re-appointed, and moved a resolution to that effect, which was seconded by the Rev. John Porter, Ballee.

Rev. WILLIAM CROZIER said the Commission had been appointed in consequence of the unseemly disputes which had occurred in Carrickfergus, and it was considered advisable to do so to endeavour to allay the strife and restore peace to the congregation. The Commission had done its duty, whether successfully or not; and, having done so, he thought that now the congregation should be restored back to its Presbytery.

Dr. MONTGOMERY—We could see that there was little chance of parties in the congregation becoming united, and we therefore appointed a Commission of the Synod, because we hoped that conciliation might take place. As to what has been done, I cannot really tell. We are an uncommonly independent people everywhere. We are so mad for independence that we can hardly be depended upon. Every man must have his own small crotchet brought out in antagonism to the opinion of every other, and the Congregation of Carrickfergus is so divided that it cannot, at least, be called a Unitarian Congregation. That the different parties can ever be brought to agree, I cannot tell; but I think we should re-constitute the Commission, and instruct them to go down to Carrickfergus, to ask the congregation what are their objects and purposes, and to consult with them whether we might not be able to heal the unhappy divisions that are amongst them. We should seek to calm the troubled waters, and endeavour to awaken a Christian spirit among them, and do what we can for the restoration of peace, and the progress of pure and undefiled religion. I cannot tell what the result will be, but I am not hopeful of success. The points of difference are so numerous that we may well doubt a reconciliation, but that is no reason why we should fail in the discharge of our duty. We must acquit ourselves in conscience to the great Head of the Church, and do what we can in wisdom and in love for the comfort and edification of that people. I know there will be great difficulty in doing so. I know very few men would have undertaken the trouble Mr. Alexander undertook for that congregation; and, if the people connected with it feel, as they ought to feel, that we are labouring anxiously for their good, something may come out of this Commission, for I presume the people of Carrickfergus do not contemplate an everlasting warfare. The end of all war is peace. Let us go, therefore, with kindly feelings towards them. If we succeed, we have gained our brethren; and if we fail we have done our duty, and can defend ourselves before the world. I must say I am not very hopeful of success, but it is possible that good may arise, as I know there are a number of good Christian men connected with the congregation.

Rev. Mr. ALEXANDER was glad to say, from a conversation he had had with one party in the congregation, that he came from Carrickfergus more hopeful than he went. Hitherto the policy of the party that supported Mr. Porter was to act against the appointment of a minister at all; however, on last Sunday, he had heard they were inclined to come to terms, and would be inclined to join in the choice of a new minister. But there was another rock ahead, for he had heard it stated that they would not allow any young man who might be chosen to answer any of their Synodical questions. For his part, he would facilitate their independence; and, if they could find greater independence in another body, it would be better than the way in which they were situated. There was hope, but very little.

A Committee, consisting of the Moderator, Rev. Dr. Montgomery, Rev. Robert Campbell, and the Rev. John Montgomery, was appointed, until next meeting of Synod, a Commission to act as they might deem expedient for the peace and prosperity of the Carrickfergus Congregation.

After some routine business the Synod adjourned till next morning at ten o'clock.

Wednesday, July 16.

The Synodical business was resumed this morning at ten o'clock. It consisted in receiving the reports of Presbyteries. In the report of the Bangor Presbytery mention was made of the withdrawal of the Congregation of York Street (Belfast), Moneyrea, and Greyabbey from connexion with the Synod. The Synod adjourned at twelve o'clock.

Thursday, July 17.

The reports of Presbyteries were read; in that of the Presbytery of Bangor it was stated that the Congregations of York Street (Belfast), Moneyrea, and Greyabbey had, during the past year, withdrawn from all ecclesiastical connexion with the Presbytery, affirming as their reason for so doing, that the regulations of the new code, in the matter of license and ordination, were a violation of the fundamental principles of the Church, and an interference with the rights of congregations.

Rev. ALEXANDER ORR said, that he did not complain of congregations withdrawing from the body, but he objected to congregations, when withdrawing, casting any unfounded imputations on the Church. All they had done in recent legislation had tended to relax their discipline, the new code of discipline being more liberal than the old. The old code of discipline gave the right to Presbyteries to impose the Westminster Confession, or, by unlimited questioning, to test the candidate's soundness in the faith. The practice of the Synod, also, generally, had been to put questions to candidates for ordination. There is a minister in this house who will tell you that, when ordained, the late venerable Mr. Davis, of Banbridge, put to him twenty or twenty-five questions, and yet we hear Mr. Davis now lauded as a great opponent of the system of questioning at all: and he himself, when installed, was asked by the Rev. Fletcher Blakely did he believe in the Scriptures as the only rule of faith and morals. He, therefore, proposed the following resolution:—"Whereas, the Congregations

of York Street (Belfast), Moneyrea, and Greyabbey, have withdrawn from ecclesiastical connexion with this Synod, on the declared grounds that certain provisions of the new code are a violation of the fundamental principles on which the Church was originally founded, and an encroachment on the rights of congregations in the election of their ministers; 'Resolved—That we deem it our duty to declare that we never departed from those fundamental principles, and that no provision of the new code can fairly be called a violation of any of them, or an interference with the rights of congregations to elect ministers holding such views of Divine Truth as they may approve.' "

Dr. MONTGOMERY said that the resolution was very moderate—more moderate than the provocation they received might justify. He would second it. He never believed that the old and respectable Congregation of Greyabbey would knowingly and wilfully—understanding what they were about—have done such a thing as pass the resolutions communicated to Presbytery. To save the congregation to the Church, he had gone ten times to Greyabbey in one winter, in the midst of frost and snow. Only for himself there would have been no congregation there for any one to steal from us. He did not blame them however; they were victims of misrepresentation. As to Moneyrea, he had seen, within the last fortnight, many of that congregation; and he had reason to believe that, had the principles of the Church been fairly put before the congregation, it would never have acted as it did. It was put into the hands of penny spouters, without standing, who called on it to get rid of the tyranny of Dr. Montgomery. The most respectable people of the congregation were thoroughly ashamed of the position into which they were led, or dragged, as a member had said to him. The York Street Congregation acted consistently with the instructions they were accustomed to receive.

Rev. JOHN A. CROZIER supported the resolution. He specially referred to that part of the Report of the Bangor Presbytery which stated that the Rev. William Hall had "abandoned all ecclesiastical and ministerial connexion" with the Synod. This was an extreme measure, and announced in extremely harsh terms, and would naturally lead strangers to the supposition that the Synod had been guilty of some very gross dereliction of duty to warrant such a course on the part of a minister who had long been connected with them. He thought they were bound, therefore, to vindicate themselves from such an implied charge; and he believed this would be effected in the best and shortest manner by simply reading to them Mr. Hall's speech in Synod at the special meeting, November 6th, 1856, for the adoption of the present Revised Code of Discipline. In relation to Mr. Maginnis's motion in favour of the "Discipleship" test,—“Mr. William Hall thought that Mr. Maginnis had not confined himself sufficiently to the question at issue. He was prepared to oppose any test as to doctrinal views and opinions, but he was not prepared to go with Mr. Maginnis in rejecting everything. He thought they should ask from candidates for the ministry a belief in God as a first principle, and before a belief in the Scriptures or Christ. The Scriptures were not the only revelation of God, how important soever they might be.

There was a higher revelation of God than the Scriptures could make. He would ask candidates to believe in God as a first principle. He would ask them to believe in Christ, not as a fact represented in and known through Scripture, but as a fundamental truth. And then, in the third place, he would ask for a belief in Scripture as a revelation of God." Now, Moderator, let it not be thought that Mr. Hall had not ample time and opportunity to mature his opinions on this subject when he uttered these words. He was Secretary and Convener of the Code Committee, and had been actively engaged for more than two years in preparing it for submission to Synod; and I think it is rather hard when this Synod, acting on his own deliberate advice, and persuaded by his powerful arguments, solemnly adopted and ratified the same three questions as part of the law of this Church, that Mr. Hall should turn round upon us, and, for no other reason or pretext that can be assigned, declare his abandonment "of all ecclesiastical and ministerial connexion" with this Synod. On Mr. Hall's various positions subsequently held in this discussion, it is not necessary to dwell. Consistent only in his inconsistency, "to one thing constant never," he was found four months after, sinking his vote in reference to the three questions, yet signing his name to a Protest against them. I shall not follow him through his several speeches, discourses, and votes for some following years; but we next find him joining in a deliberate violation of our Code of Discipline, in refusing to put the same questions in cases of installation and ordination, attempting to justify his conduct in a speech before Synod, by denying the propriety of any question whatever, and protesting against the resolutions adopted in consequence of such breach of our laws. He next appears at a "peace conference," deliberately signing his name to a recommendation to Synod to adopt a compound question understood as involving the former three; and not a fortnight after, he sends a printed circular to all our ministers, withdrawing his name from that recommendation, and declaring for absolute non-interrogation; and,—last scene of all in this "strange eventful history,"—he "abandons all ecclesiastical and ministerial connexion" with his brethren of this Synod.

Rev. H. ALEXANDER thought Mr. Crozier had failed to prove Mr. Hall's total inconsistency. In one thing, at least, he appeared to have been consistent—in preserving, all along, the liberty of stultifying himself—which he seemed to have most fully exercised.

Rev. JOHN ORR, while not defending Mr. Hall against the charge of inconsistency, said that his withdrawing from all ministerial connexion with the Remonstrant Synod could not mean what it appears to say. Considering the moderation of Mr. Hall, it was impossible to think that he desired to convey to the Synod that he would exclude its ministers from his pulpit, or refuse to enter into their pulpits.

Rev. A. ORR—Mr. Hall's words may mean what he pleases, but I, at least, intend to accept them in their full and literal signification.

The resolution passed unanimously.

The proceedings were soon after brought to a close by the Moderator pronouncing the benediction.

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE NON-SUBSCRIBING ASSOCIATION.

The Annual Meeting of this body was held in Comber, on Wednesday, July, 16th. The President for the past year, the Rev. D. Gordon, Banbridge, conducted the devotional services, and preached from Rom. xiv. 17; Eph. iv. 4; Rom. viii. 9. His sermon urged the necessity of seeking to possess Christ's spirit, showed that that spirit was not confined to any particular sect, and pointed to illustrious persons in various churches, as Fenelon, Wesley, Howard, Price, Elizabeth Fry, and Florence Nightingale, as manifesting its richest fruits.

The Clerk, the Rev. Hugh Moore, called the roll of the Munster Synod, the Presbytery of Antrim, and the Remonstrant Synod. On the Elder from Ballyclare being called, Mr. Laird rose and said that he had been appointed to represent the Ballyclare Congregation. Mr. Hall alleged that Mr. Miskimmin was his Elder.

Dr. MONTGOMERY observed that as this Association did not interfere with the ecclesiastical affairs of the separate bodies, he thought it would be better that no discussion should arise respecting Ballyclare. It is well known that there is serious division in that congregation, and the rights of neither party can be affected by our Association.

Mr. Miskimmin, as recognized by the Presbytery of Antrim, was then admitted.

The Rev. WILLIAM BRUCE then rose and said—Mr. President, there are some ministers whose names have not been called as members of the Presbytery of Antrim. Their congregations have associated together under another name—that of the Northern Presbytery of Antrim; and as Moderator of that Presbytery, I am instructed to claim that they be recognized as a constituent part of this Association. The principles maintained by the Northern Presbytery are the same now as they ever were, and are those on which this Association was founded. Our anxiety to be thus recognized does not arise from any personal advantage that it may be to us, but from an earnest desire that this Association, which at best is not too strong, should not be weakened by the loss of several congregations of the oldest standing and the highest respectability.

The Rev. S. C. NELSON would cheerfully and cordially agree to the request that the Northern Presbytery of Antrim be recognized as a constituent part of this Association. He therefore begged to move—"That the Northern Presbytery of Antrim, holding the principles of this Association, be now, and are hereby recognized as one of the bodies constituting the Association of Irish Non-Subscribing Presbyterians."

Dr. MONTGOMERY seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously, amid applause.

Rev. JOHN SCOTT PORTER handed in the roll of ministers and elders in the new Presbytery.

The Rev. S. C. NELSON moved that the Rev. John Orr be President for the ensuing year. This motion being seconded,

The Rev. W. CROZIER rose and said—I beg leave to nominate a member of the Remonstrant Synod to be President of the Non-Subscribing Association for the ensuing year. The venerable

gentleman whom I have the honour to propose has long been the most distinguished in our body by his eminent talents, his high social position, his commanding eloquence and character as a minister of the Gospel, his useful and efficient services as a Professor in connexion with our Church, his ardent and untiring zeal in the cause of Christian truth, and his life-long devotedness to the interests of the Remonstrant Synod. He has long occupied a large and conspicuous place in our denominational annals; and, notwithstanding the differences which have unhappily arisen, I yet will do my brethren the justice of thinking that we are all glad to see him amongst us in a fresh and green old age, and well pleased to tender him this tribute of our respect in the evening of his life. Though past the summer of his strength and labours, and far advanced in the vale of years, his faculties are bright and vigorous; and I have no doubt he will fill that chair with all the ability, tact, discrimination, dignity, and propriety which he did in days gone by when he occupied the same honourable position. I have the pleasure to propose the Rev. Dr. Montgomery as President for the ensuing year. (Applause.)

Rev. J. MULLIGAN (Moir) seconded the motion.

Rev. Mr. ORR withdrew his name, and Dr. Montgomery was elected unanimously, amid applause.

The PRESIDENT, having taken the chair, said—My friends and brethren, I should be very callous if I did not feel gratified at the kindness with which my name has been mentioned, and for the appointment you have made. It would be affectation to say that you have said what was untrue in saying that I have some claims upon our Non-Subscribing Church. My career has been somewhat remarkable. It is now exactly forty-four years since I was appointed as Moderator of the General Synod of Ulster. I was the youngest Moderator that ever filled the chair of that body, and it was somewhat singular that my opponent on the occasion, and my only opponent, was Dr. Cooke. At a comparatively early period of this Association I was appointed President; but, from ill-health, I was unable to remain to the close and deliver the sermon I had proposed to lay before you. I feel that there is a kind of unanimity in appointing me at this time, as Dr. Cooke has, this year, been elected for a second time Moderator of the Irish General Assembly. These are striking things, when it is remembered that it is now thirty-five years since our great contest in the General Assembly with regard to non subscription to human creeds. In the principles of non-subscription we have laid our congregations. We are, in that respect, what we have ever been. I am sure there is no member of this court, lay or clerical, that will ever submit to have his neck bound in religious matters by a yoke of human bondage: we are determined to stand fast in the liberties wherewith Christ hath made us free. I trust we shall ever resent subscription to human authority, but be devoted and enthusiastic subscribers to Divine authority, and that we shall feel it our duty to inculcate upon others the principles of Christianity, and make them the guide of our own lives. I am aware that, in the exercise of our free will, the necessary results must spring up—the results that always spring out of freedom. We are not bound by any slavish bond. We are

bound as Christian freemen, holding the one Head—even our master Christ, and all are brethren; but the very fact of our being brethren means that we shall speak freely and think freely on all things that pertain to human happiness here and the everlasting state of man hereafter. Under these circumstances differences must necessarily spring up. I lament that they have sprung up. I would much rather we were all of one mind and one heart. I believe we would be much stronger if we had unity amongst us, but I can blame no man for giving expression to his conscientious convictions. When coming here to-day I had some little fear that the excitement that prevailed in a most respectable and influential portion of our Church had not passed away, but I am exceedingly glad that peace has marked our preliminary proceedings. While I have no idea of giving up my own private views, I have no idea of sacrificing the great broad principle of thinking good to all in love.

The Rev. H. Moore was re-appointed Secretary, and M. Andrews, Esq., Treasurer of the Association.

The Report of the General Purposes Committee was then read. Nothing of particular interest arose out of it.

The Rev. JOHN PORTER, as convener of a Committee on the subject of Ministerial Support, stated that he had not convened the Committee, seeing that at present nothing could be done.

Several ministers expressed the opinion, that the matter, though most important, belonged rather to the separate bodies than to the Association, and, on the motion of the Rev. C. Porter, it was agreed that the several bodies comprising the Association should separately report at next annual meeting what had been done in each of their bounds in the matter of ministerial support during the year.

The CLERK read a letter from the Munster Synod, suggesting that the Association should pass a resolution expressing continued confidence in the National System of Education, as it was assailed by two opposite parties.—A resolution to this effect was, on the motion of Mr. Moore, unanimously passed.

Mr. GARDINER (Elder) moved that the sermons preached by the Presidents from year to year shall be published under the sanction and at the expense of the Association, if approved of, as an exposition of their principles; and that in accordance with the resolution, the sermon this day preached by the Rev. D. Gordon be published. Mr. Gardiner remarked that such a course as he recommended would enlighten the public respecting the principles which distinguished our body, and would, at the same time, prevent misunderstanding and misrepresentation.

The Rev. JOHN PORTER seconded the resolution.

The Rev. C. J. M'ALESTER rose to oppose it. Of Mr. Gordon's discourse he could only speak in the most favourable terms. It put distinctly forward a view which he believed was held by all of their body, that the true Christian spirit was to be found in men of every Church; but he could not regard that sermon, excellent though it was, as any exposition of the principles on which they were associated. Fenelon, for example, who was justly lauded, could not, were he living, be a member of our Association, for he was a Roman Catholic, and thus necessarily not a Non-Subscriber. Besides, see the difficult and painful situation in which the As-

sociation might thus be placed. Some discourse might be delivered which it would not seem desirable to publish, and consider the stigma that would thus be cast on the preacher. He hoped, therefore that the meeting would not entertain this resolution.

The Rev. J. A. CROZIER also spoke against it.

Mr. IRELAND (Elder) remarked that if the Association was to be bound by the sermons that would be preached by successive Presidents, they might far better adopt a creed at once.

Mr. PORTER begged to withdraw from the support of Mr. Gardiner's motion; he had seconded it for the purpose of eliciting discussion.

Mr. MULLIGAN (Elder) then seconded it; but, on a vote, no one else was found to support it, and it was lost.

PUBLIC DINNER.

In the evening the Comber Congregation entertained the Members and Elders at a public dinner. John Andrews, Esq., J.P. presided. The Chairman, on the part of the people of Comber, welcomed the Non-Subscribing Association; the principles which it embodied—Civil and Religious Liberty, and the Right of Private Judgment—were worthy of all honour. The following toasts were given,—“The Queen”; “The Royal Family”; “The Lord Lieutenant and Prosperity to Ireland”; “Civil and Religious Liberty”; “The Non-Subscribing Association”; “The Non-Conformists of 1662”; “Non-Sectarian Education”; “Prosperity to the Remonstrant Congregation of Comber”; “Our English Brethren”; “Our Brethren of other Denominations”; “The Health of John Miller, Esq.”; “The Health of the Chairman,” &c.—which were responded to by Revs. W. Crozier, H. Alexander, Dr. Montgomery, J. S. Porter, J. McFadden, D. Maginnis, J. Smyth, J. Orr, and by James Andrews, Esq.

PRESENTATION TO THE REV. DAVID GORDON, BANBRIDGE.

On Wednesday evening, the 9th July, the members of the 2nd Non-Subscribing Congregation, Banbridge, presented their minister with an ecritoire and a purse of sovereigns. The meeting-house was decorated with evergreens. The Rev. W. B. Miniss, of Dromore, was called to the chair, and a complimentary address to Mr. Gordon was read. It referred to his usefulness as a minister; to the excellence of his pulpit services; to his efforts for the improvement of the young by his Sunday and Day Schools; and to his kindness to the poor. “Finally,” it adds, “and especially at the present time, we desire to record our high appreciation of the noble stand which you, with others, have recently made in defence of the great principles of Religious Liberty and Non-Subscription. We rejoice to find that you are not deterred by the old, and, to us, well-understood, cry of Heresy and Infidelity from supporting the principles of 1726 and 1829—principles so powerfully enunciated in the celebrated Remonstrance prepared by our much-loved and highly-gifted Minister, the late Rev. James Davis, and adopted by his associates, as their expression of opinion against the usurpation of ecclesiastical authority and ambitious human dictation.

Mr. Gordon suitably replied, and, in reference to recent events in the Presbytery of Antrim, said—“Especially would I remember

your warm sympathy towards me and my brethren in our recent struggle against incipient creeds and inquisitions, and for the sacred cause of Religious Freedom. I believe that, in that struggle, we were in principle with the men of 1726, and with 'the much-loved and highly-gifted James Davis' and his associates, lay and clerical, of 1829. And you, their successors and the inheritors of their love of religious truth and liberty, embolden us by your 'words of cheer' to 'stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free.' "

The presentation having been made, the Chairman, in a few appropriate remarks, gave "The Presbytery of Antrim—may it always afford an asylum to those who suffer from religious persecution, or want assistance in maintaining the rights of conscience," and called on the Rev. John Porter, of Belfast, who explained fully the principles on which the Presbytery was founded, and has since ever consistently acted. The Rev. John Hall, Ballyclare, spoke to "Free Inquiry—the essential basis of a Non-Subscribing Church." "The Non-Subscribing Association" was responded to by the Rev. David Gordon, its President. The Rev. John Porter proposed "The Congregation," and connected with it the name of Mr. Gilbert Mulligan, who briefly acknowledged the compliment. Mr. Samuel Strong, the senior elder, followed Mr. Mulligan, and testified to the hearty concurrence of the congregation in the course pursued by their minister and the elder representing them during the late proceedings in the Antrim Presbytery.

OPENING OF NEW MEETING-HOUSE AT GREYABBEY.

On Sunday, July 20, the New Meeting-house, erected by the Non-Subscribing Congregation of Greyabbey, was opened for public worship. The Rev. Charles Beard, of Gee Cross, near Manchester, conducted the services, and preached an able and eloquent sermon from John i. 14. A number of friends from Belfast, Comber, and Newtownards were present. Mr. Beard also preached in the evening. A collection towards liquidating the building debt was taken up at each service; the proceeds amounted to £92.

OBITUARY.

Died, on July 17th, at his residence, Tullycairn, near Dromore, Robert Dickson, Esq., M.D.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

"The Memory of the Two Thousand" in our next.

We have received several communications on a China Mission, and will feel obliged if R. M. favours us with his address.

Communications for the Editor, to be addressed by post to Rev. C. J. M'Alester, Holywood; or, otherwise, to 28, Arthur Street, Belfast.

Orders for the work and business communications to be sent to the Agent of the Society, 28, Arthur Street.

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THE NEW THEOLOGY.

THE agitation which for some years has disturbed the Unitarian Churches in these kingdoms and in America, may be traced, directly or indirectly, to the New Theology which has been introduced into them. What this theology is, and what progress it has made, may justly claim some consideration. Till very recently, Unitarians triumphed in the belief that their doctrines were based on a careful and critical interpretation of the Holy Scriptures; and it was matter of just pride and exultation to them, that some of the ablest apologists for the Divine Authority of Revelation were of their number: of these illustrious "defenders of the faith" it may be enough to mention Locke, and Lardner, and Priestley. The Unitarian Churches, we believe everywhere, were based on the Bible: certainly on that foundation the three Non-Subscribing Churches in Ireland were established; and it has always been their boast that, while other Churches rest on the authority of Popes and Councils, or on Articles and Confessions of human authority, they receive the Scriptures as their "sole rule of faith." Other Christians have for many ages held that Jesus Christ is God, "of the same substance" with the Father, "equal in power and glory" with him: but Christian Unitarians have constantly argued that Jesus is not God the Son, but the Son of God, divinely appointed to be the Saviour of men. So, they have argued, the Scriptures uniformly teach; and when some of their opponents have, in the bitterness of controversy, charged them with regarding Christ only as a common man, possessed of superior goodness and wisdom, they have indignantly hurled back the accusation, for they felt it to be a gross misrepresentation of their

faith. What, then, is this New Theology which has been introduced under the Unitarian name, and how do its principles accord with the views which for centuries the advocates, the confessors, and the martyrs of Christian Unitarianism have maintained in the pulpit, in the prison, and at the stake? We shall see.

This New Theology regards the miracles of our Lord and his resurrection as mere fables, which, in a dark and superstitious age, had gathered round the narrative of his life. Under its teaching everything that is supernatural disappears. It is not true, we are told, that Christ by a word stilled the tempest, restored the blind to sight, or called back the dead to life : nor is it true that our Lord ever rose from the dead, and mingled again with his disciples, to comfort their hearts and confirm their faith. All these, and the many other miraculous occurrences scattered through the Four Gospels, are only, according to this new form of Christianity, so many legendary tales that, in the lapse of ages, attached themselves to the simple life of the Jewish peasant. Now, if these miracles are but fables, then the faith of the disciples which sprung from witnessing them, the words of Christ which were spoken in defence and explanation of them, the ardent faith which was kindled in the soul of the Apostles by seeing their Master restored to life, are also but fictions which grew out of these fables ; and the preaching of the Apostles, in which they refer to the miracles not as fables but as facts, must also disappear before the sweeping and heartless criticism of this New Theology. What of the Gospel does it leave behind ? We wonder that ministers of religion who have embraced this form of belief (or of unbelief) continue the practice, time-honoured though it be, of reading from their pulpits the Scriptures which abound in records of the miraculous ; especially do we wonder how, on Easter Sunday, or on any other occasion, they can gravely read before their congregations the narrative, minute in its details, of the miraculous resurrection of our Saviour, while they attach no more credence to it than to some Eastern legend.

The New Theology represents our blessed Lord as a young Hebrew peasant, gifted with a remarkable genius, and much given to meditation ; by this means, it is

alleged, he rose gradually to a clearer and fuller apprehension of God and of goodness than was possessed by the people among whom he lived. "God," we are told, "has always chosen individuals, whom he has inspired with a life superior to others, that they might be sources of life to their brethren. He made *one* Homer, *one* Plato, *one* David, *one* Paul, *one* Augustine, *one* Shakespeare, *one* Bacon, and *one* Milton"—and so, it is argued, he made *one* Jesus! Thus, by such teaching, Christ, on whose word and work the hearts of so many millions in the past ages and the present have reposed,—from whom, as the sent of God, they have derived strength for duty, comfort in sorrow, and hope, glorious and triumphant, in death, is represented in the new system as only a man of genius! Surely it was not thus the Apostles represented their Lord, when they went from town to town and from land to land proclaiming his Gospel; they believed in him, and proclaimed him as "Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God." Had they held the opinions of these enlightened divines of our day, there would have been no meaning in their preaching *Christ crucified*—they might as well have preached *Socrates poisoned*!

The advocates of this New Theology teach us, that Christianity is not to be traced to Christ and his doctrine; that it is to be found in the human soul; and that if the records of Christian truth which the Scriptures contain were lost, still its great principles and hopes would live, for they flow from the instincts of the soul and will rise up to all who devoutly meditate and patiently inquire. Thus, humanity, which Christ was sent to enlighten, purify, and redeem, may raise itself above the divine teacher, and allow its wild illusions to set at nought his plainest doctrines.

It may, perhaps, be objected that the views which we have thus imperfectly, but we think faithfully, sketched, have no claim to be called a New Theology: they are identical, we may be told, with the Deistical opinions which, in a past century, were so widely disseminated, and which drew forth from gifted men of our own and other Churches, able vindications of Christian truth. There is much reason in this objection, for it would need a discriminating mind to perceive any great

distinction between the Deism of a past age and its modified form in our own, daringly baptized though it be with the name of Christian. But if this Theology be not new, it is at least in a new place; formerly it was outside of the Church, now it is within it; formerly it assailed the citadel of Christian truth from without, now it has insidiously got a lodgment within the walls, and is busy tearing away its foundations.

It would be wrong to represent this New Theology as having appeared only in the Unitarian Church; we perceive evidences of its presence even in Churches bound most rigidly by human creeds, as, for example, in the Church of England. The notorious "Essays and Reviews," while they contain much free Christian thought, contain also views which are inconsistent with a belief in the divine authority of the Christian revelation, and prove the writers to have adopted something, at least, of the New Theology. But it is in our free Unitarian Church that the largest liberty has been enjoyed, and, therefore, it might reasonably be expected, that in it we would have the largest development of this "advanced" religion. And so we have. During the past few years it has spread itself with wonderful rapidity, first silently and stealthily, and then more boldly, till now, in a more or less distinct form, it is occasionally promulgated in several of the periodicals connected with the denomination. In evidence of what we state, let us make two or three extracts. In the *Unitarian Herald* of July 26, p. 254, a contributor thus writes:—

"With regard, I believe, to the majority of the Unitarians of the present day, the foundation of their religion is much deeper than this (the Bible): it rests on no words of an ancient book, uncertain as to its authors, doubtful in its readings, and variable in its translation, on no message given by prophets of what they say *they* have heard and seen, but on the great facts of our own nature, and the spiritual insight and experience of each individual soul."

In a similar strain a writer in the *Monthly Messenger* for August, thus expresses himself:—

"Jesus came telling us that we, as well as he, are Sons of God, and promising that the spirit of our Father should abide with us, leading into all truth; but we refuse to accept his word. We are content to take the records of his teaching that the four evangelists have given, and the words that Paul wrote, and we theorize about

these instead of believing that to us the old promise may be fulfilled, so that we may all be taught of God. . . . No olden teacher, not even he who was the Christ, *i.e.*, the anointed of God, can on these deeper matters inform us. . . . Not in the dusty folios that load the shelves of ancient libraries, not by unreasoning submission to any theological tradition, though it had eighteen centuries to attest it, but by the service of man, by the surrender of our wills to God's, and in the performance of his commands, light shall inflow into our souls. This way is that whereby the Christ himself attained unto that knowledge which so surprised his hearers, a knowledge by which he, though not wise in Rabbinical lore, and unused in the controversies of Scribe with Scribe, and Pharisees with Sadducees, ignorant of all those things which the priesthood prized most highly, was nevertheless enabled to tell them the innermost meaning of the word which priestly eyes had never seen; and so to teach that all wondered at his gracious words."

The plain English of the last passage is, that our blessed Lord had no supernatural knowledge, and that the means are within our reach of attaining the same enlightenment which he possessed! But the most striking evidence that has lately appeared of the spread of this New Theology is the publication in England, under the auspices, it is alleged, of a Unitarian Minister, of the Prayers of the late Theodore Parker. This man, whose name is so familiar to us, distinguished not only by genius and eloquence, but by disinterested patriotism and a most enlarged philanthropy, is well known to have been one of the ablest expounders and most accomplished advocates of the New Theology: and we have the peculiar views which it embraces occasionally exhibited in these devotional compositions. There are many of the prayers, indeed, in which there is no recognition of Christ at all; but where he is introduced, there is no mistaking the author's opinions respecting him; and it is only justice to Mr. Parker to state, that through his life he was remarkable for the open and manly avowal of whatever opinions he held. He never attempted "to throw dust in the people's eyes:" what he thought, he said. We shall make two or three brief quotations from these prayers, bearing on the subject we are discussing:—

"Chiefest of all do we bless thee for that noble son of thine, born of a peasant mother and a peasant sire" . . . P. 37.

"Above all others, do we thank thee for that great and noble man, who, in days of darkness and extreme peril, thou raisedst up, and through his genius didst inspire with so much of truth, and justice, and philanthropy, and faith in thee."—P. 100.

"We thank thee for great philosophers, and prophets, and poets, mighty men and women, whom thou hast blest with large genius, who, in many an age, have gathered truth and justice, and taught love, and lived blameless lives. . . . And for the greatest of them all, as we fondly dream, we thank thee, for him who taught so much of truth, and lived so much of piety in his soul, and blameless benevolence in his outward life. . . . We thank thee not less for the millions of unremembered souls of men and women, who, in their common callings of earth, were faithful to the light which shone upon them, howsoever dim, and we bless thee that by their stripes we are healed."—P. 118.

"We thank thee for him, whom, in days long since, thou raisedst up in the midst of darkness to establish light. . . . And not less do we thank thee for men with talents no smaller in our days, who likewise save their fellows by telling truth, and proclaiming justice, and living the calm sweet life which is piety within and philanthropic love without."—P. 165.

But what evidence, it may be asked, does this volume of Prayers afford of the prevalence of its peculiar theological views among English Unitarians? Not only has it been published under the patronage of English Unitarians, but the two periodicals already referred to have brought it before their readers in language of the highest laudation. "This book of prayers," says the *Monthly Messenger*, "will be found to be free from all doubtful controversial theology. . . . It is a very fitting handbook to be adopted by all intelligent inquirers who are in search of a religion that speaks to the conscience, and a theology that does not shock the reason. . . . It is marked by one peculiarity, which to some may be a recommendation, and to others a drawback,—there is no reference to the supernatural element in Christianity."

The *Unitarian Herald* has also a review of this volume, of great length and of unmingled commendation. It is from the pen of the same minister who some time ago stated that "in England and in America Mr. Parker's interpretation of Christianity bids fair to become the dominant thought of the Unitarian Church." We have no sympathy with the reviewer's doctrinal opinions; but, from a calm consideration of the evidences that are in many ways afforded of the spread of this New Theology, we confess that we have a growing faith in his prophetic skill.

A SICK-BED.

LONG hast thou watched my bed,
And smoothed the pillow oft
For this poor, aching head,
With touches kind and soft.

Oh ! smooth it yet again,
As softly as before ;
Once—only once—and then
I need thy hand no more.

Yet here I may not stay,
Where I so long have lain,
Through many a restless day
And many a night of pain.

But bear me gently forth
Beneath the open sky,
Where, on the pleasant earth,
'Till night the sunbeams lie.

There, through the coming days,
I shall not look to thee,
My weary side to raise,
And shift it tenderly.

There sweetly shall I sleep ;
Nor wilt thou need to bring
And put to my hot lip
Cool water from the spring ;

Nor wet the kerchief laid
Upon my burning brow ;
Nor from my eyelids shade
The light that wounds them now ;

Nor watch that none shall tread
With noisy footstep nigh ;
Nor listen by my bed
To hear my faintest sigh,

And feign a look of cheer,
And words of comfort speak,

Yet turn to hide the tear
That gathers on thy cheek.

Beside me, where I rest,
Thy loving hands will set
The flowers I love the best—
Moss-rose and violet.

Then to the sleep I crave
Resign me, till I see
The face of Him who gave
His life for thee and me.

Yet, with the setting sun,
Come now and then, at eve,
And think of me as one
For whom thou shouldst not grieve;

Who, when the kind release
From sin and suffering came,
Passed to the appointed place
In murmuring thy name.

Leave at my side a space,
Where thou shalt come, at last,
To find a resting-place,
When many years are past.

W. C. BRYANT.

THE CHURCH OF THE FIRST THREE CENTURIES.

THIRD NOTICE.

BEFORE proceeding, as we have promised, to notice Dr. Lamson's work in its doctrinal bearing on the question of the Nature and Position of Christ, according to the testimony of the Fathers of the Church during the period of which it treats, we shall briefly advert to the value which such testimony should possess for us, in seeking to determine important points of doctrine.

No doubt that, as Bible Christians, we derive our knowledge of the great doctrines of Christianity from the Holy Scriptures, which we regard as given by God to be

the all-sufficient foundation of our faith, and rule of our practice; and with their deliverances we are, for ourselves, perfectly satisfied. But in their interpretation we find ourselves differing, on many important subjects, from our brethren of other Christian Churches, and, it may be, from many within the pale of our own.

Under these circumstances, the value to be assigned to the knowledge of the faith and teaching of the Primitive Church, from the time of the Apostles through the first centuries of its existence, ere human corruptions had time to be generally received in place of the simplicity of Gospel truth,—if such knowledge could be obtained,—will immediately appear. Its office would be, not to supersede Scripture, not to determine the doctrines in dispute by absolute demonstration, but to afford strong presumptive evidence of the way in which they were understood and taught by the Apostles and their more immediate successors. More than this we do not claim for it, were the testimony ever so unbroken and complete. To some minds it may, however, seem to possess even higher authority, and to afford more positive proof; but to few, we believe, on a proper consideration, will its value appear less than that we have assigned to it.

We follow our author, then, in his appeal to this ancient testimony, in relation, mainly, to the Nature and Position of our Lord Jesus Christ, ere the Platonic development had raised him, on the one hand, to the rank, and invested him with the supposed attributes, of a triune Deity; or, on the other, a rationalistic reaction had sought to reduce him to the level of simple humanity.

In pursuing this subject our attention is naturally directed, in the first place, to those who came next after the Apostles themselves, their own immediate disciples and successors, and their contemporaries in the first age of the Christian Church. These, the Apostolic Fathers as they are entitled, include the venerable names of Barnabas, Clement of Rome, Hermas, Ignatius, and Polycarp, and we may add their contemporaries, Papias, and the first Apologists, Quadratus and Aristides. All these Dr. L. has dismissed with merely a brief reference, no doubt from a praiseworthy candour and impartiality, believing the writings ascribed to them, even if any por-

tion of them are entitled to be called genuine, "to have come down to us so disfigured by interpolations, or mixed up with palpable forgeries, that they cannot be safely quoted for any purpose of history or doctrine."

Without, however, thus deciding as to the genuineness of these compositions, which has long been a subject of lively discussion amongst the most eminent authorities; but simply taking them as we find them, it may be interesting for us to inquire what testimony, if any, is borne by writings claiming such venerable antiquity, and all but apostolic origin, on the subject before us.

It would be impossible, in the bounds of a notice like the present, to enter minutely into this inquiry. It may be generally stated, however, that these writings, so far as they go, in all respects confirm the position of Dr. Lamson and the evidence of the subsequent writers which he brings forward, that the doctrine of the subordination of Jesus Christ, and his distinct inferiority to the Father, was the common doctrine of the Christian Church from the time of the Apostles downward for the first three centuries of its existence, and that no mention of the Trinity, as afterwards established, is found in any of the chief writers during that period.

On the other hand, we regard their testimony as equally confirmatory of the position, that the pre-existence, and super-humanity of Christ, as distinguished from the humanitarian view, was the recognised doctrine of the early Church.

A few illustrations must suffice. As, *e.g.*, in the Epistle General of Barnabas, which, whether it be really his, or, as Neander thinks, the composition of an Alexandrian Jewish convert, was held in high honour, and publicly read in the Alexandrian Church of the second century, where the writer, as if in opposition to certain humanitarian leanings of the Judaising Christians, emphatically observes, in the 12th chapter, that Christ is not merely the Son of man, and the Son of David, but also the Son of God.*

On the other hand, of the beautiful Epistle of Clement of Rome to the Corinthians, written about A.D. 96, and held in the utmost veneration by the early Church, the

* Neander, Hist. of Christ. Relig. and Ch., Vol. II., p. 407.

following notice by Photius, Bishop of Constantinople in the 9th century, a violent Trinitarian, may sufficiently indicate the doctrinal character. He says—"There are several things in it liable to censure. One is, that the writer, though he calls our Lord High-priest and Patron, gives him none of the higher and more divine titles." And yet Clement thus writes of Christ—"The sceptre of the majesty of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, came not in the show of pride and arrogance, though he could do all things, but in humility."*

Hermas, in his visionary work, "The Shepherd," if it is to be ascribed to him, speaks of our Lord in a similar strain. He declares, in lofty terms, that "the Son of God is indeed more ancient than any creature. . . . Neither can any enter into the kingdom of God, but only by the name of his Son, who is most dear to him."†

We next come to Ignatius of Antioch, who suffered martyrdom about A.D. 107; and from the writings ascribed to him, concerning the genuineness and authenticity of which there have been such learned discussions, we select the two which are least likely to have been spurious, viz., the larger and smaller editions of his Seven Epistles. As to the nature of the testimony borne by these works, as they stand, in relation to the subject before us, it is sufficient to cite the opinions of Archbishop Usher and Dr. Lardner, that they have been largely interpolated by Arians.

The venerable Polycarp, disciple of St. John, and ordained by the Apostles Bishop of Smyrna, thus expresses himself in his short Epistle to the Corinthians, which is generally believed to be authentic: "Now the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and he himself, our everlasting high-priest, the Son of God, Jesus Christ, build you up in faith and truth." And such was the general tenor of his words in relation to the Saviour, ascribing to him the most exalted dignity next to the Father, but making no mention of his possessing an equality in the godhead with the Father of the universe.

The few fragments ascribed to Papias, a contemporary of Polycarp, and to the earliest Apologists, if they do not

* Lardner's Works, Vol. II., pp. 29 and 45.

† Lardner, Vol. II., p. 72.

contain much to support these views, are certainly wanting in anything that could, in the slightest degree, militate against their soundness. So that we come down to the more historic period, and more authentic writings of Justin Martyr and his successors, impressed with the conviction that, in the evidence we have been considering, whatever be its value,—and it is all the evidence we now possess in relation to that time,—we have met no trace whatever of the Trinity or the Deity of Christ on the one side, or, on the other, of the simple humanity of Jesus, as having been, from the days of the Apostles, the doctrine of the Christian Church. It has not, however, as it seems to us, been similarly wanting in indications that the superhuman nature of Jesus, and his position of peculiar exaltation next to the Father, as the Son of God and Saviour of the world, constituted, on this point, the faith and teaching of the primitive Apostolic Church.

In Justin Martyr we have the earliest of the Platonists, or Platonizing Fathers, as they are called, the succession continuing through the various writers quoted down to and including Origen. We cannot, in this place, enter into an examination of the difficult question as to the relative influence of the Platonic philosophy and Christianity upon each other, in this and the subsequent ages of the Church; or into the comparison of the *Logos* of the Gospel with that found in the systems of Plato and Philo the Jew. We cannot dwell upon the diverse sentiments and conflicting statements resulting from the double meaning of the word *Logos* itself, according as it was taken to signify, on the one hand, Reason or the rational principle, or, on the other, that which is its expression merely—a Word or Discourse.

Some may hold that these “early Fathers only poured the contents of the Scriptures into a Philonian vessel, and viewed the Biblical passages through a Philonian (or Platonic) medium: that the matter of their idea of the *Logos* is essentially Scriptural, but its construction betrays a ground plan borrowed from their philosophy.” Others may believe and declare themselves able to shew, “that for the original and distinctive features of the doctrine of the *Logos*, as held by the learned Fathers of the second and third centuries, we must look, not to the Jewish

Scriptures, nor to the teachings of Jesus and his Apostles, but to Philo and the Alexandrian Platonists. In consistency with this view, they would maintain that the doctrine of the Trinity was of gradual and comparatively late formation; that it had its origin in a source entirely foreign to the Jewish and Christian Scriptures; that it grew up and was engrafted on Christianity through the hands of the Platonizing Fathers; that in the time of Justin, and long after, the distinct nature and inferiority of the Son were universally taught; and that only the first shadowy outline of the Trinity had then become visible." This latter is the opinion maintained, and in our judgment with signal success, by Dr. Lamson, whose treatment of the whole question of the *Logos*, as shewing the origin, nature, and influence of the doctrine, is singularly clear and satisfactory.

Keeping, then, in view the universally admitted Platonian leanings of these early Fathers, we proceed to notice their testimony on the subject before us. From the "Apology" of Justin Martyr we cite, as evidence against the Trinity, the very passage most relied on by Trinitarians as evidence of his having held and taught that doctrine. "That we are not Atheists, *worshipping* as we do the Maker of this universe, offering up to him prayers and thanks, what person of sound mind will not confess? And that we with reason *honour* Jesus Christ, our teacher of these things, and born for this end, receiving him as the Son of the true God, and holding him in the second place, and the prophetic Spirit in the third rank, I shall show. Hence we are accused of madness; because, as they say, we assign the second place after the immutable and eternal God, the Creator of all things, to a crucified man." *

This, we take it, is little else than Unitarian Christianity pure and simple. There is nothing here that we see of the modern Trinity. Equal worship of the Father, Son, and Spirit is excluded in express terms. One other passage from this Father's works will shew the exalted position he assigned to Christ, in opposition to the humanitarian view, while it well displays the Christian liberality of his mind. He is arguing with Trypho the

* Apol. I., p. 51; Lamson, p. 58.

Jew, who has objected to his belief in the pre-existence of Christ. "Nevertheless," he says, "Trypho, the proof that he is the *Christ of God* stands, if I cannot shew that he pre-existed, the Son of the Creator of the universe. . . . But since it is fully demonstrated that he is the Christ of God, whatever be his nature, even if I do not succeed in proving that he pre-existed, and, according to the will of the Father, submitted to be born man, of like passions with us, having flesh,—in this latter respect only would it be just to say that I have erred. Still you would not be authorized to deny that he is the Christ, although it should appear that he was a man, born of human parents, and it should be shewn that he became Christ by election ; for there are some of our race (that is, Christians) who acknowledge that he is the Christ, but affirm that he was a man, born in the ordinary way, *from whom I dissent.*"*

Did our space permit, we could easily adduce numberless passages from all the most eminent Fathers, from Justin down to Origen, in support of these same views ; it must suffice, however, merely to refer to the names of such men as Tatian, Theophilus of Antioch, Athenagoras, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, Hippolytus, and lastly, Origen, as most manifest believers, one and all, in the superhumanity and pre-existence of Christ, as well as in his strict inferiority and subordination to God, even the Father. They may have wandered far into metaphysical speculations as to the peculiar nature and origin of the pre-existent Christ, as to his supposed identity with the Platonic *Logos*, or "*hypostatized*" Wisdom of the Father ; they may have differed as to the period to be assigned to his first coming forth into distinct and separate existence, by the will of the Father ; they may have disputed as to whether "created," "emanated," "prolated," "sprung forth," or "begotten," was the appropriate term to describe the nature and manner of his coming into being ;—but the fact of the coincidence and uniformity of their belief, in relation to the great doctrine before mentioned, stands beyond reasonable doubt. Their writings prove it abundantly ; and surely this illustrious line of witnesses may be taken also to prove it to have

* Dial., pp. 143, 145 ; Lamson, pp. 60, 61.

been the generally received doctrine of the Church of their times.

Let Origen, last and greatest of the list, speak for all. He brought the Alexandrian Platonism to the highest development that it reached in his time. He it was who first propounded the idea of the eternity of the Son or *Logos*, or of his having existed, a distinct being, with the Father, *before* the commencement of the measurement of time. Yet hear the clear protest of his Scriptural faith against the tendency and the results of the misdirected elements of his own philosophy. He thus reasons against the propriety of prayer to Christ: "Prayer is not to be directed to one begotten, not even to Christ himself, but to the God and Father of the universe alone, to whom also our Saviour prayed, and to whom he teaches us to pray. When his disciples said, 'teach us to pray,' he taught them to pray not to himself but to the Father, saying, 'Our Father, who art in heaven.' For if the Son," he continues, "be different from the Father in essence, as we have proved in another place, we must either pray to the Son, and not to the Father, or to both, or to the Father alone. But no one is so absurd as to maintain that we are to pray to the Son and not to the Father. If prayer is addressed to both, we ought to use the plural number, and say, 'Forgive, bless, preserve *ye* us, or something like it; but as this is not a fit mode of address, and no example of it occurs in the Scriptures, it remains that we pray to the Father of the universe alone."*

Poor Origen! blind and ignorant with all his learning; he had not attained to the grand, reconciling discovery of the "Three in One!" What a pity that he lived some three centuries too early to find his faith laid down for him in the calm and logical sentences of the Athanasian Creed, and to solve his difficulties by directing his worship to the "Holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, three Persons and one God!"

Origen was foolish enough to hold fast to Scripture, even though it lost him the belief in the Deity of Christ; and his loss is our gain. But neither did he give up his faith in the mediation of the Saviour. The same rever-

* De Orat., § 15.

ence for Scripture saved him from falling into this extreme. For he adds, "But as he who would pray as he ought, must not pray to him who himself prays, but to Him whom Jesus our Lord taught us to invoke in prayer (namely, the Father); so also no prayer is to be offered to the Father without him, which he clearly shows (John xvi. 23, 24). . . . For he does not say 'Ask me,' nor 'Ask the Father,' simply; but, 'If ye shall ask the Father in my name, he shall give it you. For until Jesus had thus taught them, no one had asked the Father in the name of the Son; and what he said was true—'Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name; ask, and ye shall receive.' . . . For ye ought not to pray to him who is constituted by the Father high-priest for you, and who has received the office of advocate from the Father, but *through* the high-priest and advocate, who can be touched with a feeling of your infirmities, having been tempted in all respects as ye are, but, by the gift of the Father, tempted without sin." He understands Christ as saying—"Ye are to pray to the Father alone, *with and through me*."*

The question, as Dr. L. remarks, could not have been better argued by the most strenuous advocate of the Divine unity at the present day.

Origen, however, was not without belief in the Trinity notwithstanding. These are his remarkable words—"Greater is the power of the Father than that of the Son and the Holy Spirit; and greater that of the Son than that of the Holy Spirit; and again, the power of the Holy Spirit surpasses that of other holy things."† Such is the *Trinity* of his faith, and, we may add, of ours also. It is the Arian or Unitarian, and, we believe, the Apostolical and Scriptural Trinity (if this "barbarous and profane word," as Calvin called it, must at all be employed). It is the same that the orthodox Neander so lucidly entitles the "economico-practical" Trinity, which "constituted," he declares, "*from the beginning* the fundamental conviction of the Catholic Church, while forming itself in conflict with the opposite theories of the heretical sects." But very different, indeed, is this doctrine from that which Neander denominates the "Ontological" (the

* De Orat., § 15.

† De Princip., L. I., c. 3, § 6.

Common or Athanasian) Trinity, which, according to him, required for its completion "a notional process of development" of five centuries in length, and which, he admits, *does not belong strictly to the fundamental articles of the Christian faith*, as appears from the fact that it is explicitly set forth in no one particular passage of the New Testament. . . . We find in the New Testament no other fundamental articles besides that of which the Apostle Paul says, that other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, the preaching of Jesus as the Messiah; and the foundation of His religion is designated by Christ himself, the faith in the only true God, and in Jesus Christ whom He hath sent."* This, at least, is candid in the great historian, though few Trinitarians, we fear, may thank him for it. We have seen Origen's views regarding the supremacy of the Father, and the strict subordination, yet superhuman exaltation, of the Son. Of his views in relation to the pre-existence of Christ, we adduce the following remarkable evidence:—That in the year 224, Beryllus, Bishop of Bostra, in Arabia, having published a work denying the pre-existence of Jesus, a Synod assembled for the purpose of settling the matter in dispute. Origen, on account of his pre-eminent learning and eloquence, was sent for to argue the point with Beryllus. He came and disputed with him at great length, and, probably by his intellectual superiority, argumentative skill, and moderation, succeeded in convincing him of his error. Beryllus afterwards addressed a letter of thanks to Origen for the instruction he had received.†

From the death of Origen, whose vast learning, and energy, and profound piety, had mainly contributed so long to hold together the divergent forces springing from the Trinitarian tendency of philosophical speculation, and the Unitarian truth of Scriptural faith, while, at the same time, the influence of his works and opinions insured their ultimate disconnection, the opposite poles began to exert more and more strongly their separate attractions.

Gregory Thaumaturgus, Dionysius of Alexandria, Cyprian, Theognostos, Pierius, Methodius, Lactantius,

* Hist. Christ. Relig. and Ch., Vol. II., pp. 286, 288.

† Eus., L. VI., c. 33; and Jerome, De Vir. Illustri., c. 60.

and other distinguished captains, followed the Eastern banner of the ancient faith; while others, many no doubt great names also, turned Westward, to find for themselves doctrines and a faith unknown before. Wider and wider became the interval; more and more distant the separating points. Eastward the last clouds of Platonism cleared away; while, on the West, they were settling down like a dark curtain shutting out the light. The last links of their long connection had grown weak enough, when Arius and Athanasius, powerful opponents in their deadly struggle, violently snapped the chain, which has never since been reunited, and may not be for ages yet to come.

The opinions of Arius are well known. He only claimed to teach the ancient doctrine of the Church from the Apostles downward, freed from the outward garb in which it had been invested by Alexandrian Platonism. Whether his claim is just, our readers must determine for themselves. It has, however, been recognised and admitted by many even of his doctrinal opponents. It is thus adverted to by Neander—"Arius was not disposed," he says, "to establish a new dogma. He certainly did not believe that he was preaching a new doctrine, but only bringing out and establishing *the old subordination system*. He intended by no means to lower the dignity of Christ, but would ascribe to him the greatest dignity which a created being could have after God, without entirely annihilating the distinction between that being and God."*

We must here take leave of this subject, comparatively unfinished as it necessarily must be, conscious that our imperfect sketch has failed to do it the justice which it deserves. We recommend our readers, however, to supplement our unavoidable deficiencies by a careful perusal for themselves of Dr. Lamson's most valuable work.

C.

* Hist. Christian Religion and Ch., Vol. IV., pp. 3, 4.

THE MEMORY OF THE TWO THOUSAND.

ON the twenty-ninth of May, 1660, the sun shone on the great city of London with unusual lustre—emblem of the intense joy that filled the hearts of the people. The son of the beheaded monarch, the heir of the royal house of Stuart, was entering the capital, and was greeted with repeated acclamations as King, while from the Tower the guns were booming, the bells of the churches chimed merrily, crowds bore banners and waved oak-boughs through the streets, and wine and ale were flowing to the health of restored monarchy. It was the birthday of the new King; he was thirty years of age. What chequered scenes he had passed through since troubles gathered round the throne of his unfortunate father! What hair-breadth escapes he had had, and what privations he had endured! But suddenly prosperity flowed on him. By an unexpected change in the feelings of the nation, and by the prudence or the cunning of General Monk, he was called to occupy the throne of his fathers: the nation was tired of anarchy and military rule, and fondly hoped that the fate of Charles's father and his own exile had done much to moderate his views of the royal prerogative, and to render him a wise and impartial ruler.

While in Breda, before his embarkation for England, he had sent a letter to the English Parliament, accompanied by a Declaration, in which he granted "a general pardon to all his loving subjects who should lay hold of it within forty days, except such as should be excepted by Parliament;" and he added—"We do also declare a liberty to tender consciences, and that no man shall be disquieted or called in question for differences of opinion in matters of religion, which do not disturb the peace of the kingdom. And we shall be ready to consent to such an Act of Parliament as, upon mature deliberation, shall be offered to us for the full granting of that indulgence." These liberal sentiments filled the Presbyterians with confident hopes that they would suffer nothing in their religious privileges by the restoration; but, in order to further their interests, they obtained a free pass for several of their ministers to go over to Breda, with a deputation of the Lords and Commons, that was sent to

wait on the King and to attend him on his return to England. These ministers had several audiences with His Majesty; they assured him of the attachment of themselves and their people to the monarchy, and their efforts for his restoration, declared that they were no enemies to moderate Episcopacy, and desired that in the worship of God those matters would not be pressed on them which to some were indifferent, but by others were regarded as unlawful. His Majesty spoke kindly to them, but said he would refer all to the wisdom of his Parliament. While waiting, by his command, in an ante-chamber one morning, they heard him at his prayers, in which "he thanked God that he was a covenanted King, and hoped that the Lord would give him an humble, meek, forgiving spirit, that he might have forbearance to his offending subjects, as he expected forbearance from heaven." One of the ministers, old Mr. Case, on hearing these words, which, possibly, as a historian suggests, were only uttered to amuse or deceive them, lifted up his hands and blessed God who had given them a praying King. This was not the only show of piety which he exhibited. While yet in Breda, he sent over a proclamation "against debauchery and profaneness;" and, when making his triumphant entry into London, he received from the Presbyterians, through their spokesman, Mr. Arthur Jackson, a richly embossed Bible, declaring, as he took it, that "he intended to make that blessed book the rule of his conduct." He assured the Presbyterian ministers that he attributed his restoration, under God, to their prayers and endeavours, and he admitted ten of their number into the list of his court chaplains. They soon found, however, that no reliance was to be placed on the King's promises, and no faith in his piety. Pleasure, not religion, was the ruling power in his mind; he may have had no hostility towards the Presbyterians, but certainly he had no love for them; his leanings were rather towards the Roman Catholics, whose opinions his brother, the Duke of York, had already embraced; but all religion he set at defiance, when it interfered with his interest, his folly, or his sensuality.

Charles had not been long on the throne, when an Act

was passed that every sequestered minister who had not justified the late King's murder, should be restored to his living. This may be regarded as only a righteous proceeding, for many had been driven from their livings, and Presbyterian ministers settled in their stead, because they had entertained conscientious objections to Cromwell's government. Some, however, who had been deposed by the Protector because of incompetency or vice, were now reinstated. No immorality and no ignorance was considered a valid ground for excluding them ; and to make room for them, some hundreds of Non-conformist ministers were dispossessed of their livings in the first year of the King's reign. The prospects of the Presbyterians gradually darkened. In 1661 an Act was passed for the better regulating of Corporations, the effect of which was to expel all the Non-conformists from the various branches of the magistracy ; and before the close of the following year, there was not a municipal officer left who was not devoted to "Church and King." The populace soon perceived that the magistrates were opposed to the Non-conforming ministers, and, as a natural result, they were subjected to insult and annoyance. They could not even worship God in their own dwellings without being disturbed by persons blowing horns, or throwing stones at their windows. After various efforts on the part of the Presbyterian ministers to persuade the King to have the affairs of the Church so settled as to comprehend them, twelve Bishops and nine assistants were appointed on the part of the Episcopalians, and as many ministers on the side of the Presbyterians, to assemble at the Bishop of London's lodgings, at the Savoy, "to review the Book of Common Prayer, and, if occasion be, to make such reasonable and necessary alterations as shall be agreed on to be needful and expedient for giving satisfaction to tender consciences." They were to continue four months, from March 25, 1661. This conference broke up without success, and the King then sent a letter to the Convocation, November 20, 1661, commanding them "to review the Book of Common Prayer, and make such additions and amendments as they thought necessary." It could not be expected that the Bishops would make such alterations as would meet the wishes of the Presbyterians, and

it has been stated that they were fortified by the King himself in their determination to yield nothing important. There is much reason to fear that His Majesty desired the Presbyterians to be severely dealt with: he had lately married a Roman Catholic Princess: his brother was warmly on the side of that party; his own convictions were gradually settling down into the same faith: and, the larger the number of those who were shut out of the Church, the stronger would be the plea for granting an Act of Toleration that would embrace all, and thus put the Roman Catholics in a more favourable position. Be that as it may, the alterations proposed by the Convocation, though numerous, were of the most trivial kind, and afforded no satisfaction to the Presbyterians. Bishop Burnet confesses that no alterations were made in their favour, for "it was resolved to gratify them in nothing." On the other hand, some additions were made that rendered the Book still more objectionable, as forms of Prayer for January 3, and May 29; new holidays were added and more lessons, as that of Bel and the Dragon, taken out of the Apocrypha. The Common Prayer Book thus amended was sent up to the King and Council, then transmitted to the Peers, and from them to the Commons, and inserted in the Act of Uniformity which we now proceed to notice.

The King's Declaration at Breda seemed to be an obstacle to the passing of such an Act as would meet the wishes of the dominant party: but it was alleged that he had made his promise conditional on the Parliament approving; and rumours were now spread that the Non-conformists were planning insurrections. By means of forged letters they were charged with laying plots in thirty-six counties. Although there was a disposition to take up arms, it was confined to members of the disbanded army, and the charge made against the Presbyterians was a transparent fiction; but it answered the purpose for which it was invented, and helped the passing of the intended Act. At length, by a majority of six votes, the Commons passed the Bill for "the Uniformity of Public Prayer, and administration of Sacraments, and other rites and ceremonies;" the Lords concurred; it received the royal assent on May 19th; and, by a strange

coincidence or daring threat, it was ordered to take effect from the Feast of St. Bartholomew, August 24th, 1662. One of the provisions was, that "before St. Bartholomew's Day every parson, vicar, or other minister whatsoever, should, on pain of deprivation, declare openly and publicly his unfeigned assent and consent to everything contained in the Book of Common Prayer; renounce the Solemn League and Covenant; acknowledge that the oath taken to maintain it involved no moral obligation; and further, declare that it was unlawful, under any pretence, to take up arms against the King." It was ordered that the Prayer-Book as thus revised should be printed, and a copy sent to every minister; but the work did not come from the press till very shortly before the day appointed for assenting to it, so that many did not see it, and gave their assent and consent to a book they had never read! About three thousand declined to subscribe; and when the terms of subscription were clearly understood, about two thousand refused, and were driven from their livings.

It has been said that these Non-conformists were only treated as the Episcopalian ministers had been some years before. It is true that a similar act of injustice and cruelty had been perpetrated then; but not to the same extent, for a fifth of their income was continued to them to protect them from want, but the Two Thousand were driven from their pulpits and their homes, stripped of all their living, and thrown with their families upon the world. We feel indignant, as we think that many of the most learned and godly ministers of that day,—men, too, who had done much to restore a regular Government,—should be thus ejected by the bigotry of the Parliament and the perfidy of the King; and we wonder when we reflect that the Church, as then amended in its Common Prayer Book, is still the only Church by law established. But we turn from the persecutors, to admire those who were the victims of their cruel wrath—the Two Thousand, whose memory, after the lapse of two centuries, is now being honoured by many millions of their countrymen of various shades of opinion. Some of them, as Richard Baxter, resigned before the appointed time, that others might see the course they determined to pursue: the

majority waited for the sad day, still spoken of as *Black Bartholomew*; and then, conscience nobly triumphing over interest, abandoned their means of subsistence, and went forth, not knowing whither. Some died broken-hearted; some emigrated; some became physicians; some teachers; and many, who had lived in comfort and even in affluence, were compelled to engage in menial employments to earn a livelihood. Yet, however humble the post they held, they sought every opportunity, even at the risk of suffering the severest penalties, to preach the word; and, by their secret but indefatigable labours, the seeds were more widely scattered of that dissent which is so important an element in the religion of England. Many touching stories are told of their privations and their piety. We shall give one. The lady of a country Squire was dangerously ill. The clergyman was sent for, but returned word that "he was going out with the hounds, and would come when the hunt was over." "Sir," said one of the servants to the afflicted husband, "our shepherd, if you will send for him, can pray very well; we have often heard him pray in the field." The shepherd was immediately summoned to the side of the sufferer, and prayed with such astonishing pertinence and fervour, that when he rose from his knees, the gentleman said to him—"I conjure you to inform me who and what you are, and what were your views and situation in life before you came into my service." Upon this, he told him that he was one of the ministers ejected from the Church, and that, having nothing of his own left, he was content, for a livelihood, to submit to the honest and peaceful employment of keeping sheep. This good man was an Oxford Master of Arts, had been noted for his knowledge of Hebrew, and revered by his brethren for his many excellencies of mind and life.

Most of those ministers felt that no human authority could free them from their ordination vows. Through the years of persecution, occasioned by the Act of Uniformity, and the various penal enactments made to enforce it, they still assembled their scattered flocks for prayer. The Puritans at Andover met in a dell four miles from the town, or in a private residence, which they would enter when their neighbours were asleep, and

then, having fastened the doors and window-shutters, and even extinguished the candle-light, lest its flicker might be discovered through a crevice by some spy without, they continued in prayer till the ray of dawn slanting down the chimney warned them away. Flavel's congregation met at midnight, in the hall of Hudscot Manor-house. Other congregations met at the same hour in woods. All were in peril; but that of the leaders was of course the greatest. Dressed like a husbandman, with a fork on his shoulder and a Bible in his pocket, the venerable Richard Chantyre used to set out in the twilight to his distant conventicle, thus continuing to evade the informers for years. Mr. Baxter informs us that many hundreds of them, with their wives and children, had neither house nor bread; the people they left were not able to relieve them, nor durst they, if they had been able, because it would have been called a maintenance of schism or faction. Many preached to such as would hear them in fields and private houses, till they were apprehended and cast into jail, where many of them perished.

The memory of these faithful ministers is a rich legacy to their countrymen, and to all who value religious freedom. "They nobly acted what they nobly thought." Many now rise up to call them blessed, who have no sympathy with their religious views, but have the deepest sympathy with their unyielding resistance to human authority in religious matters. Baxter, Calamy, and others were quite willing "to subscribe," if certain modifications in the Book of Common Prayer were obtained; and willing too, to be ministers in an Established Church which excluded the Independents and other Sectaries. Non-Subscription, as we receive it, they did not understand; much less did they dream of that newly-invented Non-Subscription which would leave ministers at liberty to receive the Scriptures as their authority, or to reject them; but all delight to honour their noble testimony for God and conscience. If popularity and fashion should tempt any to sacrifice conscience that they may worship God according to the Prayer Book, as approved of by a King who was in earlier life a Deist, and afterwards a Roman Catholic, but always a depraved sensualist, let them consider that it is something in God's sight to be faithful to

conviction, though inconvenience and even suffering should be the result, and gather a lesson of duty and encouragement from THE MEMORY OF THE TWO THOUSAND.

BLACK BARTHOLOMEW.

MUST I be driven from my books ?

From house, and goods, and dearest friends ?

One of thy sweet and gracious looks

For more than this will make amends !

As for my house it was my tent,

While there I waited on thy flock ;

That work is done, that time is spent,

There neither was my home nor stock.

Would I in all my journey have

Still the same inn and furniture ?

Or ease and pleasant dwellings crave,

Forgetting what thy saints endure ?

My Lord hath taught me how to want

A place wherein to put my head ;

While he is mine, I'll be content

To beg, or lack my daily bread.

Heaven is my roof, earth is my floor,

Thy love can keep me dry and warm ;

Christ and thy bounty are my store ;

Thy angels guide me from all harm.

As for my friends, they are not lost ;

The several vessels of thy fleet,

Though parted now, by tempests tost,

Shall safely in the haven meet.

RICHARD BAXTER, 1662.

A CATECHISM FOR OUR TIMES.

Question. Wherein has Unitarianism been a failure ?

Answer. In unconsciously taking for its motto a misreading of Proverbs iv. 23: "Keep thy *head* with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life."

Q. Where is the text, thus read, to be found with full comments ?

A. In the Gospel according to Buckle.

Q. What is the result of such religious "head-ship?"

A. A rationalness which some are uncharitable enough to think indifference, and a church too "broad" in proportion to its length and depth.

Q. Into what does an all-head religion often harden?

A. Into scepticism.

Q. Into what does it flatten?

A. Into formalism.

Q. Into what does it soften?

A. Into aestheticism, figures, metaphors, and "such beautiful prayers and chants."

Q. Can the world be saved without "great sermons?"

A. Assuredly not.

Q. The more the better?

A. No. Only one every fine Sunday.

Q. Must we, then, confess ignorance to be the mother of devotion?

A. No, not of devotion that is worth any thing. The opposite of wrong is not necessarily right.

Q. What shall we say of attempts to *liturgize* our religious body?

A. Galvanism is not life. "Why seek ye the living among the dead?"

Q. Have our many words on "broad church," "liturgies," "reason and faith," roused, warmed, or quickened us?

A. To all appearance, NO.

Q. What do we fear the most?

A. Earnestness—we call it fanaticism.

Q. Must we, then, try to stop thinking, and feel, feel, feel?

A. No. Unitarians cannot be Moravians or Methodists.

Q. Must we stop thinking, and believe, believe, believe?

A. No. We can be neither Roman Catholics nor Calvinists—perhaps one as soon as the other.

Q. What if our hearts are "cold and dead?"

A. Do, and then you will *feel*, and your theological thought can never become scepticism or indifferentism.

Q. What shall I do?

A. "The duty that lies nearest thee; thy next duty will thus already have become clearer." Thou livest in a most momentous hour. "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and" THEN "Christ will give thee light."—*New York Christian Inquirer*.

A NOVEL MISSIONARY ASSOCIATION.

Our Intelligence department this month contains a brief report of the Annual Meeting of the Provincial Assembly of Lancashire and Cheshire. It would seem that while formerly it was called Presbyterian only, it is now named "Presbyterian and Unitarian," a designation which is certainly calculated to puzzle the uninitiated. That many of the ministers who compose it are Unitarian we are fully aware; that any of them are in any just sense Presbyterian we greatly doubt. We are told that with them Presbyterian is a

historic name, and that certain congregations are still Presbyterian, though they are Independent; and we suppose that if they should become Episcopalian, still they would be *historically* Presbyterian. We do not wonder that the Rev. J. N. Porter objected to the sectarian name of the assembly, as his connexion with it might seem thus to bind him to principles which he has renounced; but those who had been for years members of the body seemed to disagree as to whether it was Unitarian or not. The discussion which arose led to the conclusion that its principles were free, and it was stated as a fact, that it embraced Trinitarian and Unitarian, and more—for as Dr. Beard observed, “they did not ask what any man’s opinions were,” and he might have added that there were those of every phase of religious thought, from Trinitarianism to—Transcendentalism. And surely there is nothing wrong, but much that is beautiful and good, in men holding diverse opinions and yet mingling in fraternal union; such meetings may powerfully tend to rub off the asperities which so often gather round the hearts of the best of us. And in such meetings there may be counsel and co-operation for the promotion of knowledge and goodness. Such subjects as temperance, education, and the cause of the poor slave, may engage their thoughts and enlist their united efforts. But how can such a medley society engage in missionary efforts for the spread of the Gospel? We are told in the Report that “an annual amount of more than £1,200 passes through the hands of the Association for Missionary purposes in the province.” What views of the Gospel are preached? If the ministers go out themselves occasionally as missionary preachers to some of the stations which have lately been established, how conflicting must be their teaching! Mr. Howarth and Mr. Madge would teach one form of Christianity, Mr. Bishop and Mr. Cropper another, and Mr. Binns and Mr. Creery another. Which of these interpretations of the Gospel is it the object of the Mission to propagate? We presume that the missionaries never feel themselves bound to exhibit Christianity in such a form as not to conflict with these diverse views, and hence to teach only those doctrines which are common to them all; but either they must pursue this course, or else the various preachers will be contradicting one another, and perplexing those whom they desire to instruct. A mission so constituted seems to us supremely absurd.

It is with pain we criticize the constitution of the Mission of the Lancashire and Cheshire Assembly. We admire the zeal and liberality with which its members labour; they seem to be earnest in the work they are engaged in; but we fear that their greatest success will only be the spreading of a low form Christianity, hardly deserving the name. What we desire there, and here, and wherever the Unitarian faith is held, is the clear and distinct preaching of Christian Unitarianism, as taught in the Holy Scriptures and expounded by such men as Channing and Ware, Lindsay and Armstrong. For that faith many, we believe, yearn; and happy will it be for our Church when, our divisions healed, we shall give our best energies for its spread among rich and poor, at home and abroad.

AN UNSPOKEN SPEECH.

THE *London Inquirer* of July 26, in its report of the recent meeting of the Non-Subscribing Association in Comber, puts into the mouth of the Rev. S. C. Nelson a speech which he never spoke. On the application of the Rev. W. Bruce, that he and his co-presbyters should be recognized as members of the Non-Subscribing Association, in as much as the principles maintained by the Northern Presbytery of Antrim were the same now that they had ever been, and were those on which the Association was founded, the Rev. S. C. Nelson rose and moved—"That the Northern Presbytery of Antrim, holding the principles of this Association, be now and are hereby recognized as one of the bodies constituting the Association of Non-Subscribing Presbyterians." Mr. Nelson, in moving this resolution, spoke a sentence or two, expressing the cordiality with which he agreed to the request, and the respect which he entertained for the brethren who had withdrawn from the Presbytery of Antrim, adding that he regarded the application made by Mr. Bruce as *primâ facie* evidence that the Northern Presbytery held the principles of Non-Subscription. But in the *Inquirer* Mr. Nelson is represented as speaking thus:—

"Although I and others might object to receive them upon the grounds of their disqualification, and allege that their constitution, which imposes tests on intrants at ordination and installation, necessarily disqualifies such ecclesiastical body from any legitimate union with a Non-Subscribing Association, still, I am willing to take the profession of the principle as evidence *primâ facie* of the intention of the Presbytery; and, under present circumstances, with the view of raising up no irritating topics of discussion, I will move their admission. I say I take their own profession of being Non-Subscribers; but, in doing this, I by no means admit, but, on the contrary, deny, that the present principles of the Northern Presbytery are the same as those of 1726."

We have abundant evidence to show that Mr. Nelson made no such speech. We have inquired of several of those who were present, and who were deeply interested in the proceedings, one of them almost touching him while he spoke, and they agree with us in the firm belief that neither those words, nor words tantamount to them, were spoken by Mr. Nelson. Farther, a faithful account of the proceedings appeared in the *Northern Whig*; the acute and intelligent reporter of that paper was present; he was familiar with the matters that had agitated the Presbytery of Antrim, and neither he nor the paper which he represented had any leanings that would have led him to cushion so important statements; yet the speech which the *Inquirer* reports does not appear in the columns of the *Whig*. The *Inquirer's* report of the meeting seems to be abridged from the *Whig*; it had no reporter of its own there. How, then, came this remarkable passage to be dove-tailed into its report? What cunning hand introduced it? Was it an after-thought of the speaker which, to carry out his wild ideas of Non-Subscription, he deemed it important to publish? We hope not; for that would

have been neither an honourable nor an honest proceeding. Who, then, reported it, or in whose brain did it arise? Into many a ridiculous statement the *Inquirer* has been led by its *Irish* correspondents. The author of this "unspoken speech" seems to be the most *Irish* of them all.

There is direct evidence that Mr. Nelson spoke no such words at the meeting of the Association. There is indirect evidence, if possible, more convincing. His reporter represents him as saying that "the constitution of the Northern Presbytery, which imposes tests on intrants at ordination and installation, necessarily disqualifies them from any legitimate union with a Non-Subscribing Association." This test, be it known, is an acknowledgment of a Divine revelation and the Divine mission of Christ, which, because it is required, would exclude those who impose it from any title to the name of Non-Subscribers! Shame, say we, upon the Church, Subscribing or Non-Subscribing, that would ordain or instal any man, of whose belief in these Christian principles it was not fully satisfied. The objection that is thus ridiculously made against the Northern Presbytery, applies with equal force to the Remonstrant Synod. Neither Mr. Bruce nor Mr. J. S. Porter had liberty to speak, for they had not yet been admitted members of the Court; but is it likely that Dr. Montgomery, Mr. Alexander, Mr. Crozier, and others, would have sat patiently by, and heard it stated that they too, and their brother Remonstrants, could not have any legitimate connexion with the Association of which they are so conspicuous ornaments and so valuable supports? Why, the meeting would have been thrown into a tumult, and many voices would have indignantly denounced so presumptuous and absurd a statement.

This myterious reporter of Mr. Nelson alleges farther, that "the principles of the Northern Presbytery are not those which were held in 1726." Mr. Bruce had stated that they were; and here again there would have been a discussion provoked; for we are greatly mistaken if Mr. Bruce, whose ancestral associations with the Presbytery of Antrim are so intimate and so sacred, would have suffered such an imputation to have been cast upon him and his cherished principles, without in some way or other repelling it. We have given evidence enough, surely, that this remarkable speech, full of studied misrepresentation and insult, not against the Northern Presbytery alone, but all the Remonstrant body, was never spoken. We ask again—who is the reporter of the "unspoken speech"—who?

A PARAGRAPH EXPLAINED.

WE are surprised to learn from a correspondent that the concluding paragraph of an article in our last number, entitled "Non-Subscribers—Who and Why," has been supposed to countenance and support those latitudinarian principles which it was the object of the writer to combat. In the passage referred to it is said that "there is need in our time of a New Church on broader principles than have yet been promulgated, one which shall take for its basis,

not the divine records which the Scriptures contain, but reason and conscience, the light of nature and the writings of the wise, including "the good old book;" and it is ironically added—"our present Churches, even the freest, are too narrow for the growing enlightenment of the age." Those who have watched the controversy which for several years has agitated the Non-Subscribing Churches in these kingdoms, must have perceived that it sprung from an effort on the part of some to widen the terms of admission, so that those might be received as ministers in their connexion who refused to acknowledge anything divine in the mission of our blessed Lord, or in the revelations of the Holy Scriptures. We think that the article referred to, and others that have appeared in our pages and elsewhere, abundantly demonstrate that Non-Subscription, as understood and taught by those who founded our free Christian Churches, never was designed to sanction such rationalistic views. It simply secured freedom to all in the interpretation of the Scriptures, but involved no liberty to reject those Scriptures and yet continue in the Church. Let men's views of religious liberty be as enlarged as they may, they must, we think, admit, if they calmly investigate the subject, that an acknowledgement of the divine authority of the Christian revelation is the very basis of our Non-Subscribing Church. Therefore it was most reasonably argued that, while there are those who are dissatisfied with this basis, and make conscience and reason, the light of nature and the writings of the wise, including what they approve of in the Bible, their religious guides, they should inaugurate a new Church on such a foundation, and not strive, under the venerable and hallowed name of Non-Subscription, to admit these free and, as we believe, most pernicious principles. We are thankful that there is full liberty in our day for men to profess and advocate any opinions which they may hold: and if there are those who desire a Church so very free, that those who admit and those who deny the divine mission of the Saviour may equally minister under its sanction, they may have it; but we wish for no such freedom in our Church. Our Non-Subscribing fathers, in the past century or the present, never would have recognized as a teacher in their body any man who would not freely and unreservedly have acknowledged the divine authority of the religion of Christ, while at the same time they guaranteed to all the right of private judgment in the interpretation of the Scriptures. Such is the rational liberty which we advocate, and such the reasonable limitations to which we cheerfully submit.

INTELLIGENCE.

DIVINITY SCHOOL, CAMBRIDGE, U.S.

On Sunday evening, July 13th, the Rev. Dr. A. P. Peabody preached before the graduating class of the Divinity School from John xvii. 19: "For their sakes I sanctify myself." The discourse was worthy of the eminent preacher and the solemn occa-

sion. He thus concluded :—" My young friends, do not lose sight of the holy object of your calling. Let it be your ambition to win souls for your Master. Talents may win you temporary success, but cannot give you true spiritual influence. Consecrate yourselves then ; thus shall your word come with power from on high. And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and may you so commend yourselves to him, that the record of your ministry shall be written on high."

On the following Tuesday the annual visitation of the Divinity School was held. After prayer, by the Rev. Dr. Francis, the young men who had completed their theological course read the themes that had been prescribed to them. They were characterized by great vigour and freshness of thought, by a spirit and tone distinctly Christian, and, in some instances, by signal ability. The exercises were closed with prayer by the Rev. Professor Hedge, full of earnestness and devotion.

At the meeting of the Alumni in the afternoon, a graduate of the Class of 1854 was introduced, and gave an account of his personal religious experience. It was very interesting. He had graduated with disbelief of a personal God, and with views no higher than the naturalistic. It was his own essay that gave rise to so much disturbance in the graduating Class of that year—an essay that was pronounced by his Professors unfit to be read to a Christian audience. He vindicated the judgment and action of his Professors. He had come to feel the need of Christ to satisfy his spiritual nature, and to enable him to do the work of life, and through Christ he had come to the Father. He had from the first devoted himself to the work of reform ; but his failure to accomplish what his heart moved him to undertake, and what he saw was needed to be done for himself and his fellow-men ; his observation of the spirit and working of many of his associates in reform, made him feel the need of a spiritual power he had not yet obtained, until it at last became clearly revealed in Jesus Christ. Now Christ was to him "the power of God unto salvation." He had no theory to present about his nature, but Christ was Life and Light to him. He realized the truth of those words—"No man cometh unto the *Father*, but by *me* ;" and—"I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit ; for without me ye can do nothing."

At four o'clock, the Rev. E. E. Hale preached before the members of the Divinity School in the Appleton Chapel.

PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY OF LANCASHIRE AND CHESHIRE.

The annual meeting of this Assembly was held at Chowbent, on June 19th. There was a large attendance of ministers and delegates from the various congregations. The Rev. J. Drummond, Manchester, conducted the religious services, and the Rev. J. Gordon, Dukinfield, preached an able and instructive sermon, illustrative of the history of Nonconformity. After the service, the chair of the business meeting was taken by the Rev. M. C. Frankland, minister of Chowbent. The chairman gave an interesting account of the history of the ancient chapel in which they were assembled, mak-

ing especial reference to the celebrated Dr. John Taylor, who is buried in the chapel yard.

The Rev. J. T. WHITEHEAD, Secretary, then proceeded to call the roll of ministers and delegates. By way of introduction he was mentioning first several new names which had been added to the old list. Amongst these was that of the Rev. J. Nixon Porter, of Warrington, and formerly of Carrickfergus.

On Mr. Porter's name being mentioned, he rose and asked by what authority his name had been inserted.

The SECRETARY answered that the minister of Warrington was *ex officio* a member of the Assembly.

Mr. PORTER then resumed, and said he was but recently settled in the province, and had anticipated much pleasure from association with his brother ministers. But within a few days he had seen the Assembly designated by a sectarian name, of which he disapproved. He had no wish to be a member of such a sectarian assembly; and, besides, he had made no application to be one. He objected to the word Unitarian, and thought that the double title of "Presbyterian and Unitarian" was fraught with danger. The services, too, closed with a collection for a sectarian purpose. So long as this purpose was avowed he must stand aside, for he hoped to live in love and brotherhood with his fellow ministers of all denominations.

After a considerable interval of silence the Rev. C. BEARD said: Presbyterian and Unitarian ministers meant the ministers of all free churches who chose to join the Assembly. He was here in that capacity himself, and he would be the last person to let his name remain on the roll, if the Assembly forfeited its claim of two hundred years old to be an Assembly of the free Christian congregations of Lancashire and Cheshire. Even the Missionary branch was formed with zealous care to avoid any merely sectarian aim or tendency.

Dr. BEARD said the Assembly was perfectly free. They did not ask what any man's opinions were. He hoped that Mr. Porter would reconsider his statement.

Mr. PORTER said he thanked the Assembly for its willingness to receive him, but, consistently with his views on Non-subscription, he could not join it. Its very name involved a declaration of anti-Trinitarianism.

The Rev. F. BAKER said the Assembly was certainly Unitarian, or anti-Trinitarian, and any man who held Trinitarian opinions would put himself before the public under false colours if he joined it.

Here the Rev. J. GORDON interposed, and asked what evidence there was for saying that the Assembly depended on any anti-Trinitarian belief.

Mr. BAKER said the evidence was in the usage of a century. No one could mention a Trinitarian congregation that had belonged to the Assembly for the last century. He challenged and defied them all to do this.

The Rev. R. L. CARPENTER said there were persons members of the Assembly who were not Unitarians, and instanced the Rev. Franklin Howarth, Dr. Philip Carpenter, and Mr. Travers Madge.

The Rev. J. S. GILBERT thought the addition of Unitarian to the title Presbyterian was a mistake. The latter was comprehensive, and the former repulsive.

The Rev. J. WRIGHT was willing for both Presbyterians and Unitarians to join the Assembly. But he was there as a Unitarian, and if they left that name out, should come no more, for neither he nor his congregation were Presbyterians. They had formerly been called so, but were so no longer, and would and could come as Unitarians only.

The SECRETARY then proceeded to call the roll in due order, and on arriving at "Warrington," and calling the Rev. J. Nixon Porter, Mr. Porter requested that his name might be left out, as he was not satisfied.

Mr. H. A. BRIGHT then read the report of the Missionary branch: it embodied four District Reports, all showing good work done during the past year, and all holding out promise of still greater usefulness in the future. "Already an annual amount of more than £1,200 passes through the hands of these associations for Missionary work in the province, and while several old congregations have been revived, no less than eighteen new mission stations are in full operation." It thus concludes: "The important labour which we have taken up requires the united support and sympathy of all. Already much has been effected, and if our exertions are only maintained with zeal and earnestness, we shall, God helping us, effect a great Christian work, and shall at the same time be strengthening those churches which are already in connexion with our venerable assembly." The report was adopted and ordered to be printed. Resolutions were passed in reference to ministers' salaries, and to the celebration of the 200th anniversary of the ejection of the Two Thousand ministers.

At the conclusion of the business-meeting there was a collation in the School-room,—C. Wright, Esq., presided. At the close of the repast, various sentiments were given from the chair, and responded to by the Revs. J. Gordon, J. Drummond, F. Baker, H. Green, C. Beard, W. Gaskell, J. Robberds, and others. The proceedings terminated with a vote of thanks to the minister and congregation of Chowbent for the accommodation afforded to the Assembly, and a similar vote to C. Wright, Esq., the chairman.

SOUTHERN UNITARIAN SOCIETIES.

The Annual Meeting of the Southern Unitarian, and Southern Unitarian Fund Societies, took place on August 6th, at Wareham. The Rev. R. Shelley conducted the devotional service, and the Rev. J. Panton Ham delivered an appropriate discourse from John xv. 5: "He that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing." After service, the business of the Societies was conducted, the Rev. C. C. Nutter in the Chair. The Rev. E. Kell read the Reports of the two Societies. The Report of the Southern Unitarian Society, in addition to its usual details, contained a respectful allusion to the loss the district had sustained in the death of the Rev. Maxwell Davidson, the Minister of Wareham. The Report of the Southern Unitarian Fund Society

comprised reports from the several congregations in the district connected with it. Some of these were highly interesting, and indicated considerable congregational zeal and activity. The Report contained, also, allusion to the Bicentenary Course of Lectures now delivering in the eastern part of the district, by an exchange of Ministers, to be concluded on St. Bartholomew's day.

The Rev. H. HAWKES, after alluding with much pertinence to the Bicentenary year, moved: "That this meeting, concurring in the Bicentenary of the Ejection of the Two Thousand clergy from the Church of England, records its grateful respect for the memory of those great and good men who abandoned their earthly all at the call of conscience, and trusts that the remembrance of their noble heroism will induce many in all coming generations to emulate their unswerving allegiance to integrity and truth. That this meeting expresses its hearty concurrence in the measures which have been adopted in London for the commemoration of this glorious event, by the establishment of the 'Bicentenary Memorial Fund,' having as its object the raising of money for a 'Ministers' Stipend Augmentation Fund' south of the Trent—assistance to 'the Ministers' Benevolent Fund,' and to a 'Mission Fund'—under the management and direction of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association—and it cordially wishes the 'Bicentenary Memorial Fund' increasing and abundant success."

The Rev. E. KELL seconded this resolution.

After the passing of other resolutions bearing on the objects of the meeting, the proceedings terminated. The friends of the Societies afterwards dined together, W. Pike, Esq. in the chair.

NEW UNITARIAN CHURCH IN SAN FRANCISCO.

The success of the Rev. T. S. King's labours in San Francisco is shown by the fact that not only has the congregation been entirely relieved from debt, but has so increased in numbers that a larger place of worship has become a necessity. An eligible piece of ground, costing upwards of £2,000, has been purchased and paid for. The building will, it is estimated, cost £8,000, and of this sum nearly £7,000 has already been subscribed, which, with the sale of the present church for about half that amount, will enable the congregation to carry out their plans on a liberal scale, and without risk of embarrassment.

S W I N D O N .

On Sunday, August 3, the services of the first anniversary of the Free Christian Church in this place were held,—the Rev. John Ellis, of Diss, preaching two impressive sermons to large audiences. On the following Tuesday there was a tea-meeting in the School-rooms, attended by nearly two hundred persons, and a public meeting was afterwards held in the Church. The Rev. F. R. Young, whose labours in this new and interesting field have been most indefatigable, gave an interesting account of the operations of the past year, expressing deep thankfulness for the success that had crowned their labours, and much hope of greater progress in the future.

NOTTINGHAM.

On Tuesday, August 5th, a meeting was held in the chapel on Peaschill Road, chiefly for the purpose of giving a welcome to the Rev. W. H. Quinn, the lately-appointed minister,—L. Heymann, Esq., in the chair. The meeting was addressed by the chairman, the Rev. W. P. Clayden, W. H. Quinn, and others. We trust that the ardent hopes which are entertained by Mr. Quinn and his friends in this new field of labour may be more than realized.

PUDSEY.

On Sunday, July 27th, the anniversary sermons of the Sunday-School connected with the Unitarian Church, Pudsey, were preached by the Rev. Henry Eachus, lately of Belfast. On the following evening a welcome tea-party was given to Mr. Eachus, the new West Riding Unitarian Missionary. About eighty persons were present, and, at the conclusion, a public meeting was held, Mr. J. S. Jones, President of the School Committee, in the chair. Mr. Jones opened the proceedings by simply noticing the object of the meeting—to give Mr. Eachus and his family a welcome among their new friends at Pudsey. Mr. J. Wilcock moved, "That this meeting desires to offer to the Rev. Henry Eachus a cordial welcome on his coming to reside amongst us, and to assure him that its kindest sympathies are with him in the work he has undertaken as West Riding Village Missionary." Mr. Varley seconded the motion. Mr. Eachus thanked them for their kindness, and expressed a hope that they would all work together harmoniously and earnestly.

SUNDAY-SCHOOL ENTERTAINMENT AT MONEYREA.

On Tuesday, August 12th, the pupils and teachers of the Moneyrea Sunday-School met at twelve o'clock in the meeting-house, where they were addressed by the Rev. John Jellie, of Belfast. They then repaired to Tullyhubbert Hill, where they spent the remainder of the day in amusements. After they had partaken of refreshments which had been provided for them, they were again addressed briefly by the Rev. John M'Caw, of Killinchy; and, after a prayer by the Rev. Dr. Davidson, of London, they dispersed to to their several homes.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

"L." is correct in stating that Mr. Joseph Miskimmin was not at the meeting of the Non-Subscribing Association in Comber. He was represented as being present as Elder from Ballyclare, and is so reported in the printed Minutes. Other persons are also printed in the Minutes as "Elders present" who were not at the meeting at all. The attention of the Committee of the Association has been drawn to the matter, and it is hoped that such inaccuracies will not again occur.

Communications for the Editor, to be addressed by post to Rev. C. J. M'Alester, Holywood; or, otherwise, to 28, Arthur Street, Belfast.

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A RELIGION FOR THE LIFE.

ANY one who calmly and impartially examines the sacred records of Christ's life must, we think, come to the conclusion that the great object of his ministry and death was to make men good. This is the obvious tendency and purpose of his teachings and exhortations, his promises and warnings. Some may say that his great object was to save sinners, and that is true; but it was to save them by making them good; and we see nothing in any portion of his doctrine which justifies the opinion that men may continue in sin, and yet be saved,—may be wicked in this life, and happy in the life to come. We might fortify the position we have laid down by quoting from the Saviour's Sermon on the Mount, and the other prominent discourses which he uttered, as well as by referring to his own perfect life, and contemplating the beauty of goodness as there it shines forth so brightly; but we presume that it is needless to adduce evidence of that which no intelligent reader of the Gospel narrative will be disposed to deny. If, then, the grand purpose of Christianity is to make men good, the particular interpretation of the Gospel which tends most directly and powerfully to that end is probably the true interpretation; at any rate, there is much presumptive evidence in its favour. Such, we think, is Christian Unitarianism. True, this is not the argument by which the advocates of this form of Christianity support their views: they argue for their truth from the direct teachings of Christ and his apostles, who taught in the plainest language the oneness and fatherhood of God—his boundless love and unfailing mercy; the subordination of Christ in his highest office, and his manifestation of the Father's love in his life and in his

death; the free agency and responsibility of men; and a future life in which we shall be judged for the deeds done in the body. Text after text of Scripture can be cited to prove these simple, rational, and important doctrines; but it is well to seize on every illustration which may help to sustain our simple and holy faith, and at the same time to exhibit its particularly practical character.

Christian Unitarianism maintains the great truth so frequently set forth by our blessed Lord, that God is our Father; and it jealously guards this precious doctrine by exposing the fallacy of those theories which limit his love, and represent him as partial, vindictive, and cruel. Now the direct tendency of this view of God is to make men good. It does not always produce this result, but that is its tendency. The harshness and tyranny of earthly parents often blight the gentler and holier affections of their children, and render them selfish and rebellious. The homes in which kindness and gentleness reign, and in which no partiality is seen, is most likely to be the nursery of virtue, and to develop in the children sentiments of obedience, trust, and submission. Such, as Unitarians read God in nature and in Christ, is his government of the world. Let his children of every sect and every nation heartily embrace this grand, fundamental, and consolatory truth of the Gospel, and the tendency must be to awaken in their hearts love to Him and charity to their fellow-men. If the creed which men hold represent God as partial, and as consigning the vast majority of the human family, Christian and heathen, to unutterable agonies in hell for ever, is it wonderful that they should find similar sentiments of partiality and cruelty rising up in their own breasts?

Christian Unitarianism distinctly maintains that men are free agents; and it utterly discards the favourite theory of many divines, that the destiny of each human being was determined before the foundation of the world. It must be hard for that man to cherish high and noble aspirations, and to struggle resolutely against sin; who believes that his fate is already fixed, that he has no power within himself, and that he is only moved to good or evil by the irresistible influence of God or of the devil. If the

unfortunate captive who is toiling in bondage feels that he has no power to better his condition, he will sink into gloomy despair; the thoughts of his fatherland may often arise in his mind, and tidings, perhaps, from its distant shore may sometimes reach him: but he has been reduced to a mere machine, and is in hopeless bondage to another, and to strive for freedom would be vain. But let him not only cherish the thoughts of freedom, but feel that it is in his own power to win it, and he will not be satisfied to pine away in slavery. Noble desires will kindle in his soul, and these desires will prompt to resolute and repeated struggles: baffled again and again, he does not despair; hope still shines into his heart, and at length, with God's blessing, he achieves his liberty. So with the Christian who accepts the plain teaching of his own consciousness and of Christ's word. Our Lord recognizes the freedom of our will, for he invites, exhorts, and entreats us to follow him. Think of any one asking the slave loaded with fetters to follow him into the green plains and over the blue hills. The invitation would be only a cruel mockery. Christ does not thus mock; he knows what is in man; he knows the capacities for good which he possesses, and he leads the way to holiness. That interpretation of the Gospel which distinctly exhibits the freedom of the human will, and our capacity for following Christ, has surely the most powerful tendency to produce a good life.

Christian Unitarianism is distinguished by teaching that men shall be judged according to their works, including, of course, not merely the outward acts, but the secret thoughts and feelings of the soul. It may be asked, Do not all Christians hold the same opinion on this subject? It might be thought so, when we consider how very plainly the Saviour and his disciples teach this reasonable truth. But it is, nevertheless, the fact, that most Christians hold the very opposite doctrine, and argue that our good works have nothing to do with our acceptance on the day of judgment. The truthfulness and honesty, the benevolence and self-denial, the purity and holiness of a man's life, are, by the multitude, considered as in no degree recommending us to the favour of God; and while such a view of good works is so generally incul-

cated, is it to be wondered that Christian character is found so glaringly inconsistent with Christian profession? It seems to be most important to press strongly on all the unspeakable value of goodness; this, Christian Unitarianism emphatically does; it argues, that for it there is and can be no substitute. "He that doeth righteousness is righteous." It requires that men should obey Christ's moral and religious precepts; and it is thus only echoing the command of our Lord himself; for he represents him as his disciple "who doeth the will of his Father," and those as truly loving him, who "keep his commandments." It does not follow that in thus setting forward the great importance of good works, we hold that our works entitle us to heaven. We have, in ourselves, no title to any mercy God bestows. All the blessings which are treasured up for the children of God in the future life, are, like the blessings that crown our days here, the free gifts of our heavenly parent; but he has been pleased to make obedience in life a condition on which such blessings are bestowed; and the religion which thus gives value to good works is evidently best calculated to accomplish the object of the Gospel, in leading to a holy life.

Neither does it follow that there is no room for repentance even in the evening of life. That Gospel which is our guide in spiritual things puts most prominently forward the efficacy of repentance. Our Lord illustrates it by one of his most beautiful parables; and, to awaken repentance in the soul, and thus secure the forgiveness of sin, was the grand object of our Lord's most ignominious and painful death. But repentance leads to holiness, and thus accomplishes the great purpose of Christianity, in making men good.

As Christian Unitarianism contends for goodness, as that which is above all else needful, it necessarily attaches less importance to the mere opinions which men hold, than those systems do which maintain that salvation depends on a particular creed; and hence it is never found indulging in those denunciations and anathemas which are associated with other forms of Christianity. It recognizes goodness in every section of the Church universal, and even beyond the pale of Christianity; it denounces neither

Deist, Jew, Mohammedan, nor Heathen. Its disciples cannot join with them in a "broad church" for the joint propagation of truth and error; but it holds that denunciation is not the province of any man, good or bad, enlightened or ignorant. It gratefully recognizes goodness wherever it can be found, but sees, in its own rational and holy principles, the most powerful motives and encouragements to a good life.

If Christian Unitarianism be thus a religion for the life, and if it tend to carry out most efficiently the grand purpose of Christ's mission, by rendering men good, subduing their evil passions, and strengthening and purifying their nobler affections and powers, the question may naturally arise—Are the disciples of this faith better than their neighbours of the Church of Rome, of England, or of Scotland? We dare not say they are. We call up to our mind some in private and in public life, of both sexes, who, by their noble efforts and wonderful self-denial, have done much good in the world, and have thrown a lustre round the unpopular faith which they have professed. Among the most active reformers and most devoted philanthropists in this reforming and philanthropic age, may be found a goodly proportion of our "household of faith;" and in every rank, many of our fellow-believers are honoured and esteemed by their neighbours of other churches for their integrity, their generosity, and their unostentatious piety. But we have certainly no grounds for exultation and triumph. On the contrary, there may be too much reason for humiliation; but of this we are sure, that of all the forms which the Gospel of Christ has assumed, Christian Unitarianism is, in its principles and its tendencies, *the Religion for the Life*.

If they who wear the chains of creeds, once knew the happiness of breathing the air of freedom, and of moving with an unencumbered spirit, no wealth or power in the world's gift would prompt them to part with their spiritual liberty.—*Channing*.

MEDITATION.

ANOTHER autumn darkens dimly o'er me,
 And on the margin of the very shore,
 Where many passing seasons I have stood,
 I stand again ;—again the waves flow on,
 Even to my feet, and the wild sea-bird's note,
 Fit music for such hour and such scene,
 Swells on the swelling breeze. Fond memory turns
 To long departed, unforbidden years,
 And musing thought recalls these vanished hours
 Of early happiness, till words arise
 To clothe these visions ere they pass for aye
 To dim oblivion.

I do remember me a tiny child,
 When a few shells or pebbles were enough
 To kindle gladness,—or a daisy leaf
 Of crimson hue so rich a treasure seemed,
 That wonder grew, might it be quite my own ?
 And the soft breath of heaven on my brow
 Wafted Elysian dreams. Oh, richest gift—
 I thank thee, Father, that it hath been mine—
 This love of nature in her every mood ;
 It woke with conscious life, remaineth yet
 In growing strength, though years are flowing on,
 And bearing me on many a surging wave
 From these loved scenes to an immortal shore.

Yet here what beauty, whether it be sight
 Or sound that charmeth. Lo ! the fleecy clouds,
 So many-hued, so strangely piled, assume
 A meaning to the fancy ; and the hills,
 Dim in the fading light, seem homes of peace.
 Quiet is here, yet sounds of busy life
 Remotely murmur. Brightly 'neath my feet
 The hardy heath is blooming as of old,
 And as of old a spray or two is plucked,
 As though ne'er seen before. The graceful fern,
 Linked with old story, waveth in the breeze.
 The tremulous harebell tosseth to and fro
 Its azure, stolen from the skies of June—

An innocent theft, for all the beauty won
 Leaves undiminished wealth of glorious hue.
 And all this loveliness appeareth mine,
 And only mine, while here I muse alone.

Alone, yet never lonely ; for the soul
 Craves solitude to nurse its better thoughts.
 Dimmed in the worldly whirl, the heart hath need
 Of winnowing search ; for evil dreams arise
 We know not when, and passion's scorching breath,
 Like the Simoom, flows o'er us, withering up
 The perfumed verdure of our infant years,—
 Our innocence, our truth,—these gleams from heaven,
 Too soon o'erclouded by the mists of earth,
 Tainted by error, or obscured by sin.
 In solitude alone we know ourselves ;
 Not what we are as man to erring man,
 But what we are as man allied to God.

M.

“WILT THOU THAT WE COMMAND FIRE TO COME
 DOWN FROM HEAVEN?”

A DISCOURSE PREACHED ON SUNDAY, 24TH AUGUST, 1862, IN THE MEETING-
 HOUSE OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CONGREGATION, BELFAST.

And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem ; and he sent messengers before his face ; and they went and entered into a city of the Samaritans to make ready for him ; and they would not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem. And when his disciples, James and John, saw this, they said, “Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did ?” But he turned and rebuked them ;* and they went to another village.—LUKE ix. 51—56.

It is not my purpose to enlarge upon the exposition of this text ; yet I cannot refrain from saying a word or two on the contrast between the feelings of the Samaritans and the disciples on the one hand, and the sentiments of the blessed Saviour on the other, as they are here respectively presented to view.

The Samaritans were actuated by a spirit of narrow sectarian bigotry. They had a temple on Mount Gerizim, which they asserted to be the true and divinely-appointed

* The words which are here inserted in the Authorized Version are probably spurious, and are rejected as such in the editions of the New Testament by Lachmann, Tischendorf, and Tregelles.

place for the worship of Jehovah. The temple of Jerusalem they looked upon as the seat of a schismatical altar, and the head-quarters of a heretical church. And because the Saviour appeared to be on his way to that spot,—so detestable in their eyes,—for the purpose of joining in the sacred rites of some of those festivals which they abhorred, they refused to receive him. They denied him the food and shelter which the laws of hospitality and the precepts of their own religion declared to be the right of the wayfarer and the stranger. We see here the power of bigotry in perverting the conscience and hardening the heart.

Bad as their behaviour was, that of the sons of Zebedee was worse. They were not satisfied with laying those who rejected their master under a ban of social exclusion; they sought to destroy them. Had they possessed any civil power or judicial authority by which they could have reached those who would not receive him whom they revered as the Messiah, and of course despised their own ministrations as his disciples, no doubt they would have exerted their utmost jurisdiction. They would have seized them; they would have stripped them; they would have flogged them; they would have plundered them; they would have imprisoned them; they would have murdered them, without mercy and without scruple. Having no human means of wreaking their wrath upon them, they petitioned for leave to inflict a supernatural vengeance. They said, “Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?” Such is the most usual resource of bigoted men, when deprived of the power of persecuting the objects of their abhorrence. When they are unable to light the faggots and to kindle the pile around their victims, they would gladly call down fire from heaven to consume them. But conscious that here also they are powerless, they are obliged to be content with sentencing them to the flames of hell. Like James and John, their prototypes, they quote Scripture to justify their intolerance. Like them, too, they pervert and misapply the records which they quote. Elijah predicted the descent of fire from heaven on men who, while acknowledging him to be a “man of God,” yet sought to

entrap that they might murder him (2 Kings i. 10*): but the enraged disciples of Christ were desirous of killing men who were actuated by no homicidal purpose, and whose narrow churlishness was unaccompanied with treachery.

But the great lesson of the narrative is contained in the account of Christ's behaviour. Far from approving or sanctioning the proposal of the sons of Zebedee, "he turned and rebuked them." What were the precise terms of the censure which he pronounced upon them, we do not know; for those which are given in the common editions of the New Testament, and in our Authorized English Translation, are wanting in several ancient copies, and are probably spurious. But the exact words are of no consequence. It is enough for us to know that our Saviour, instead of commending the zeal of his disciples, pronounced upon them a rebuke: and that instead of inflicting vengeance on the Samaritans who had so unkindly treated him, he simply removed from among them, and "went into another village." He thus practically illustrated the precept which he had a short time previously delivered to the twelve apostles: "Whosoever will not receive you, when ye go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet for a testimony against them" (Luke ix. 5): and confirmed the lesson which he had taught to John, when he would have forbidden one who "followed not with the disciples" from casting out demons in the name of Christ. "And John answered and said, 'Master, we saw one casting out demons in thy name; and we forbid him, because he followeth not with us.' And Jesus said unto him, 'Forbid him not; for he that is not against us is for us.'"

From these passages it is not difficult to deduce the Gospel rule for the conduct to be observed towards *unbelievers*, men who receive not Christ in the character which he claims; and those whom we may consider *misbelievers*; because they "follow not with us," in the interpretation of his doctrines, or the sense in which we understand his practical rules of life.

We are not to persecute them. We are not to silence

* See the *Revised Translation of the Old Testament*. The verb is in the future tense, not the imperative.

them. We are not to deprive them of life or liberty ; of property or reputation. We are not to “ call down fire from heaven to consume them ;” nor are we to gloat with satisfaction over the torments which we anticipate for them in the world to come. *We must follow Christ ourselves.* This may require us to depart from the company of some, with whom, if it were possible, consistently with our adherence to Christ, we should be glad to be associated. But we are neither to *do* them nor to *wish* them ill. On the contrary, we are to seize on every occasion that may present itself for doing them good. Among other ways of benefiting and serving them, we are not only at liberty, but we are in duty bound to do them spiritual good, by endeavouring to lead them nearer to Christ, so that they may have a more distinct perception of his divine authority, and a clearer insight into his soul and heart and mind. But as these efforts are to be prompted by the purest charity, so they are to be carried on by those methods only which the sincerest brotherly love would approve and dictate. They are to be made in the very spirit of Christ ; and in those ways of which he himself has given the precept and set the example.

It is melancholy to reflect how little these principles have prevailed in the church which the blessed Saviour planted upon earth. From a very early period in its history, its members, even when they were in common exposed to the fury of pagan persecutors, began to devote to damnation, to anathematize and curse, not only the Jews and heathens who “ did not receive ” the Gospel, but their fellow-Christians who “ followed not with them ” in the interpretation of its teachings. Eusebius, the earliest historian of Christianity whose works have come down to us, while relating the heroic faith and triumphant fortitude of the martyrs who sealed their testimony to the Gospel with their blood, confesses that he drew a veil over their mutual quarrels, their contentions and revilings of each other, on the ground of the speculative opinions which they held respectively.* No sooner did Christianity become the religion of the state, than its adherents became

* *Eccles. Hist.*, Book viii., chap. 2 ; *Life of Constantine*, chap. 9 ; *Martyrs of Palestine*, chap. 12.

the relentless persecutors of those who adhered to the faith of their Jewish or pagan forefathers. There are countries in Europe in which, to this hour, a Jew, if he were known to be such, and if he refused to recant, would be consigned to the flames. And the return of this day—the feast of St. Bartholomew—reminds us of two events which sadly demonstrate the readiness of men, professing to be disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, to visit with the severest penalties which it is in their power to inflict, such of their fellow-Christians as differ from themselves, not merely in their view of those doctrines which they look upon as the essential articles of the faith, but even in respect of forms and ceremonies, and modes of worship, which they themselves confess to^d be, in their own nature, indifferent and unimportant. I advert to these things with pain; but I cannot help it. I advert to them for no selfish or sectarian purpose; not with a view to revive dead animosity, or to inflame the rancour of conflicting sects. I advert to them with a very different object, as I trust you will soon perceive. But the occasion calls upon me to speak; and to be silent at such a time were both sin and shame.

You are aware that during the period which historians, by common consent, have denominated the dark ages, the Church of Rome was enabled to extend her influence over the whole west of Europe; and many were the corrupt practices and unscriptural doctrines which she then obtruded upon the world as articles of faith. Not merely did she erect into a dogma the Trinity of Persons in the Godhead, but she raised to the same rank the worship of the Virgin Mary, and of saints, angels, and archangels, as intercessors with God. She raised to the same rank the doctrine of her own infallibility; that of transubstantiation, or the change of the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper into the body and blood of Christ; the adoration of reliques, images, and pictures; auricular confession, penance, and priestly absolution; the sale of indulgences; the efficacy of purchassd masses, as a meritorious sacrifice available for the living and the dead; the merit of monastic vows, and other so-called works of supererogation; prayer in a tongue unknown to the people; and many others of the same sort. The denial of these, or any of

them, was treated as heresy ; and laws were procured under which heretics, when condemned by the ecclesiastical courts, were handed over to the secular power and punished with death. But the human mind at last revolted in many places against this thralldom. In Germany, in Switzerland, in England, in Scotland, multitudes threw off subjection to this repulsive system. In France, also, many did so. The authorities of the Church and State attempted to bring them back by force. But the Huguenots, as they were called, were numerous and valiant. They stood upon their defence. There was a civil war ; there were struggles, sieges, battles fought with various success. At last, in the year 1570, a peace was made between the contending parties ; but historians, both Catholic and Protestant, declare that on the part of the court the pacification was a mere artifice, in order to get the Huguenots more completely into its power. For the purpose, as was alleged, of cementing the agreement, a marriage was proposed between Henry, the young King of Navarre,—who was head of the Protestant party,—and the Princess Marguérite, sister to the King of France. The wedding was to take place in Paris. The nobles and chiefs of the Huguenots were invited to be present at the ceremony ; and they came, as was their wont, attended by large bodies of their friends and retainers. While thus assembled, they were suddenly attacked, on a preconcerted signal, by an armed force, which was kept in readiness for the purpose, assisted by the fanatical mob of the city, to the leaders of which previous orders had been given to have their bands prepared for the occasion ; and on the 24th of August, in the year 1572, many thousands of the Reformed were brutally and barbarously slain. The massacre soon spread to other cities, and to all the provinces ; and the Duc de Sully calculates that not less than 70,000 men, women, and children—for no age, no sex was spared—were put to death before the carnage ceased. Pope Gregory XIII. was overjoyed at this butchery. He caused public thanks to be returned to Almighty God for the auspicious event ; he commemorated it by a medal, copies of which are occasionally met with in the cabinets of those who are curious in such matters ; and by no less than three large

pictures, which are yet to be seen on the walls of the Sala Regia, in the Vatican.*

Would to God I could say that the fell spirit of intolerance was confined to the adherents of the Romish hierarchy; but the case is far otherwise. Our Protestant forefathers disgraced their religious profession by the avowal and the practice of persecution. Cranmer, and Latimer, and Ridley fell victims to the bigotry of the Roman Catholic party in the reign of Queen Mary; but they had been themselves instrumental in procuring the execution of several of their fellow-Christians, as heretics, in the days of Edward VI. In the reign of Elizabeth, James I., and Charles I., the high-church prelates deprived, fined, imprisoned, pilloried, and mutilated their brother Protestants,—*the Puritans*, as they were called; who from a not unreasonable dread of seeing the nation hurried back again into Popery, objected to those Popish ceremonies which had been retained in the Church of England, and which, they thought, facilitated the return of the people to Catholicism. On this account they scrupled the use of such vestments as copes and tippets, albs and surplices, when enjoined as necessary adjuncts in the celebration of public worship; and the bowings, and crossings, and genuflexions,—facing to the east,—and bending their bodies towards the altar,—which were prescribed by the rubrics. When the Puritans gained the ascendancy, they in like manner expelled from their livings, as malignants, all clergymen who declined to swear the Solemn League and Covenant, and who persisted in using the Book of Common Prayer. They made the use of the Prayer-book by any person, male or female, even in a private dwelling-house, a criminal offence.† They declared, through the solemn votes of their most important councils and assemblies, that they detested and abhorred the very name of toleration. They procured the passing of a law for the suppression of heresy, compared with which the severest persecuting statute ever enacted by

* Many Roman Catholics, however, looked upon the massacre with abhorrence, and absolutely refused to imbrue their hands in innocent blood: and no writers express their detestation of it more forcibly than the Catholic De Thou and Pèrefixe.

† The Ordinance for suppressing the use of the Prayer-book bears date the 23rd day of August, 1645,—*the eve of St. Bartholomew*.

any legislature since the creation of man would be considered mild and gentle in its provisions. On the restoration of King Charles II., in the year 1660, the High-church party once more acquired the supremacy; and soon recommenced, as if with a zeal whetted by long abstinence, the barbarous work of oppressing their fellow-Christians. The Presbyterians were in possession of all, or nearly all, the livings in the Church of England, the fellowships in both the Universities, and the masterships in the principal public schools throughout the kingdom. And although these men had heartily promoted the restoration of the King to the throne of his ancestors,—and although His Majesty had issued a solemn proclamation, in which he “declared a liberty to tender consciences, and that no man should be disquieted or called in question for differences of opinion in matters of religion which did not disturb the peace of the kingdom,”—their services, when no longer needed, were speedily forgotten; and the royal promises, when they had served the turn, were shamelessly violated. By an Act passed in the second Parliament of that deceitful monarch’s reign, all clergymen who should not declare “their unfeigned assent and consent to all and everything contained and prescribed in and by the Book of Common Prayer,” on or before the 24th day of August, in the year 1662, were expelled from their benefices, and deprived of all their income and emoluments. To their immortal honour, a great number of these men, amounting to nearly 2,000, on that day chose to obey God rather than men. They counted not all their honours and possessions dear unto them, so that they might “finish their course with joy;” and “esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures” of this life. Their case was rendered harder by subsequent statutes. They were prevented from engaging in the practice of the law or of medicine; from opening a school; or from coming within five miles of any place in which they had formerly exercised their ministry; or of any corporate town or borough sending members to Parliament. The object of these provisions was to deprive them of all means of support; and even to shut them out from intercourse with those whose sympathy and kindness might have lightened their affliction. Nevertheless, it is

recorded by one who made it the business of the greater part of his life to collect memorials of them and of their families, that he scarce knew a single instance of any among them having sunk into abject poverty. Even "in the mountain the Lord will provide!" And the same has been said, on similar authority, of our own predecessors, the Presbyterian ministers of the North of Ireland, who had been ejected from their benefices, and silenced from preaching the Gospel some time before the expulsion of their English brethren on the day of St. Bartholomew.

And now for a few words of practical application. We may draw from the history of these illustrious confessors some lessons which many of them never themselves learned. The chief of these is the great lesson of charity, toleration, and mutual forbearance in respect of theological differences. We have seen how good men and conscientious men persecuted each other on account of the tenets which they respectively held, and thought that in so doing they were doing God service. It was a rooted and ingrained principle with the greater part of the divines of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, that error in doctrine is a condemning sin: next, they assumed that whatever differed from their own cherished convictions must necessarily be error: then they took it for granted that the sin of heresy is to be repressed, like crimes against society, by temporal punishment: and, lastly, they believed that when God invested them with political influence or power, it was their bounden duty to wield the sword of authority for the purpose of cutting out heresy, false doctrine, and schism wherever they shewed themselves in the body politic. It would be easy to select from the sermons, the solemn resolutions, and the authentic state-papers in which the Puritans of the Commonwealth put forth their principles, many shocking protests against the toleration of any one whose opinions did not come up to their own standard of what they regarded as fundamental doctrine. No doubt they all pleaded for toleration, but it was merely for the toleration of their own sect when it was out of favour. The Episcopalians pleaded for toleration from the Roman Catholics in the days of Mary; but they persecuted the Catholics under Elizabeth. The Puritans entreated that

they might be indulged in their scruples in the days of James and Charles I.; but they granted no indulgence to the High Churchmen or the Sectaries under the Long Parliament. The Independents besought a toleration from the Presbyterians of the Commonwealth; but they persecuted with the utmost rigour the Quakers and Anabaptists in Massachusetts. While all of these,—Episcopalians and Catholics, High Church and Puritans, Presbyterians and Independents,—thought themselves bound in duty to consign to the flames any heretics who impugned their darling doctrine of the Trinity in Unity. We see the folly and sinfulness of all this. We see in the utter failure of all these efforts to force men from or to a peculiar set of opinions,—for they all failed, signally and egregiously failed,—the decision of our Great Creator, speaking through the nature of man and the providential government of human affairs, announcing the absurdity and guilt of attempting to fetter conscience, to control the reasoning faculties in their application to the solemn truths of religion, or to seek, by such means, to attain,—what never yet has been attained by any means,—a uniformity of faith. We can see farther. We can see in this history a practical condemnation of all efforts to support religious truth, or what may be deemed such, by an alliance between Church and State—an alliance which has, in all ages, been the means of corrupting both. Let us lay this lesson to heart, and remember that it applies as well to our private conduct as to our political relations. While we endeavour to uphold our own views of Christian doctrine—views which, whatever they may seem, or may be to others, are, *to us*, Christianity itself, let us do so by no means but those which reason and the Gospel sanction,—those which are mild, charitable, and loving. Not by angry denunciation,—not by social exclusion,—not by contemptuous treatment;—but by solid argument,—by friendly conference,—by calm expostulation. These are methods by which no right is invaded, no vindictive feeling roused, no alienation caused or perpetuated: I believe it will, after all, be found that these means are the most effectual as well as the most Christian.

We have outgrown the intolerance of our Presbyterian ancestors. We have also outgrown their gloomy theo-

logy, their dark views of human nature and of God, their rigour and austerity in their families, their more than Jewish sabbatarianism, their aversion to social enjoyments and innocent amusements, and their over-scrupulous punctiliousness with regard to forms and ceremonies. For their opinions upon all these points we can make large allowance, considering their circumstances and the times. Especially can we excuse their reluctance to admit into their celebration of God's worship anything for which they could not find a Scripture warrant. They lived face to face with Popery, which then, as now, claimed a right to impose its yoke on the minds of all; and supported, as it was, by a large party in the nominally Protestant Church, strongly entertained a hope—not yet abandoned—of being able to regain the ascendancy which it lost by the death of Queen Mary. Our ancestors were justly suspicious of everything which facilitated the transition of the church and nation back to Popery once more. We excuse, therefore, many things in them which we have ourselves outgrown. But there is one thing in their character which, I would fondly trust, we have not outgrown,—their adherence to conscience, and their determination to follow her wherever she might lead the way; though she should conduct them to shame, and poverty, and reproach, to the dungeon, the gibbet, or the stake. Here is a pattern of fidelity and fortitude, deserving to be held in everlasting remembrance, and worthy of eternal honour. In a worldly, sensual, and corrupt age, these men bore a convincing and much-needed testimony to the power of genuine religion in the soul, which rebuked the libertine, confirmed the wavering, and silenced the scoffer. It is not too much to say, that we owe much of whatever practical religion and vital godliness now exist among us, to the self-denying, self-renouncing zeal of these faithful men. Let us profit by their example, and, amidst the far inferior temptations and trials to which our faith is exposed, let us shew ourselves worthy of being called their descendants and representatives, by our willingness to abandon every honour, to relinquish every possession, to renounce every hope that cannot be cherished or retained consistently with duty to God and fidelity to our trust. How

do such examples rebuke the worldliness, the selfishness, the backwardness of many ; their cowardice in defence of what they profess to regard as Christian truth ; their readiness to desert her standard, when fashion and self-interest beckon them to join the ranks of her opponents !

But I cannot conclude this review without an expression of devout thankfulness to God for the altered times and circumstances in which our lot is cast. Under God, we are grateful to those men to whose labours we are largely indebted for the peace and tranquillity which we now enjoy in the profession of our religious opinions, and the exercise of our religious worship. Among these, those venerable confessors, the fathers of non-conformity, hold a distinguished place. Their fidelity, their zeal, their constancy, their unflinching fortitude, not only confirmed the minds of those who agreed with them in their religious views, but in time touched even the hearts of their opponents and persecutors. It was found that these men could not be put down. They might be fined ; they might be imprisoned ; they might be put in the pillory ; they might be scourged ; but they could not be silenced. The only thing that would have been effectual for that purpose, would have been, to put them one and all to death. But that was impossible. Public opinion would not have endured it. Even their persecutors themselves would have shrunk back appalled from such an execrable means of putting down opposition. As it was not possible to put them down, they were first connived at, then indulged, and, at length, in the reign of our great and good deliverer, the immortal WILLIAM III., they received a legal toleration. The Act of Toleration then granted, was, no doubt, sadly defective. Neither the legislature nor the non-conformists were then prepared for a measure founded on the broad principles of religious liberty. Roman Catholics and Unitarians were both exempted from the benefit of the Act. But subsequent statutes have remedied the injustice, and so enlarged the bounds of freedom, that, practically, no man in the British Empire is liable to be called in question for the religious opinions which he entertains or avows. In our own days, within the memory of living men, we have seen the penalties for the denial of the Trinity removed ; the Test and

Corporation Acts, for England, repealed; the Catholic Emancipation Act passed; and what more than all the rest marks the liberal spirit of our legislation, the Chapels Act carried by sweeping majorities in both Houses of Parliament. All these measures have been enacted by a legislature the members of which are chiefly members of the Church by law established, while they are all calculated to remove penalties and disabilities under which Dissenters laboured. Assuredly we live in happy times; and, while all this rapid march in the way of improvement should encourage us in our efforts for farther reform, it should inspire our hearts with gratitude for the privileges which, under God's good providence, we enjoy. We rejoice to know that, as the last of these beneficent statutes was passed under the administration of a great statesman, whose name is inscribed in indelible characters in the history of Great Britain and the world, so it met with the hearty concurrence of the best beloved Sovereign that ever filled a throne. We bless God that we live in such times, and it only remains for us to prove ourselves worthy of the privileges which we enjoy.

J. S. P.

SPREAD OF THE NEW THEOLOGY.

IN our last number we gave a brief sketch of those opinions which have recently cropped up in several churches, but most distinctly and boldly in our own, and which, for convenience, we have designated "the New Theology," although the views that characterize it are not a thing of yesterday. If not new, however, they are at least in new ground; and the rapidity of their recent growth has been remarkable. Some eighteen years ago they were propounded by the Rev. John Taylor, then minister of the Glasgow Unitarian Congregation, in a letter to his people entitled "Religious Union," in which he denied the miracles of Christ, and set aside the divine authority of his revelation, but yet expressed a hope that, as Unitarians always professed themselves the friends of free inquiry, he might still be acceptable as their pastor; arguing that there should be religious union on a basis

broader than the Gospel of Christ. We believe we are correct in stating, that the Unitarian Church, generally, mourned over the departure of an honest and gifted man from Christian principles, and the Glasgow Congregation required his resignation. So generally were such opinions disapproved of in the denomination, that none were found to plead for Mr. Taylor, or charge the Glasgow friends with intolerance or persecution because they dismissed their minister. Since that time a wonderful change has occurred; the people and their ministers have, we suppose, become more enlightened, and sentiments which then were universally condemned, are now regarded with the utmost complacency. We gave extracts from two periodicals of the denomination, shewing, not that such were the opinions of the editors, or of the majority of their readers, but that they deemed it right to circulate them, and that they considered them perfectly compatible with modern Unitarianism. The most direct and striking evidence of the spread of this New Theology was the publication of Mr. Parker's Prayers, under Unitarian patronage, and the hearty commendation which the volume received in reviews written by two Unitarian ministers. Let it be remembered, that in one of these prayers occurs the following sentence :—

“ We thank thee for him whom, in days long since, thou raisedst up in the midst of darkness to establish light. . . . And not less do we thank thee *for men with talents no smaller in our days.*”

Since we wrote the article referred to, further evidence has appeared of the growth of these opinions in our Church. A letter has been published in the principal periodicals of the denomination, from the pen of the Rev. W. Binns, setting forth a novel plan of celebrating the Bicentenary of St. Bartholomew's Day, 1662. Mr. Binns says :—

“ It is an admitted fact that there are in the Unitarian Church many persons who sympathize, in the main, with Theodore Parker's interpretation of Christianity, and who have derived from him much spiritual benefit. And indeed a long list of well-known ministers and laymen, who are Unitarians solely or chiefly through his influence, might easily be made out. Some of the richer Unitarians born, and Unitarians converted, naturally think that they cannot more appropriately testify their gratitude, or help their brethren out of darkness into light, as well as illustrate the theolo-

gical growth which two centuries of free thought have nourished, than by publishing an edition of Parker's Select Works, which shall be within the reach of all classes. . . . In a free and many-sided Church like ours, there will be some persons who are unable to sympathize with what we propose; but I feel persuaded that to others it will be welcome news, and they will hail it as one significant and fitting memorial of the Bicentenary of 1662."

The Rev. John Wright, of Bury, joins Mr. Binns in bringing out this exposition of free Christian thought, and rearing such a memorial to the honour of Baxter and Calamy, and the other confessors of 1662.

Mr. Binns intimates that, "in a free church such as ours, there will be some who do not sympathize with the proposed publication." We earnestly trust there are many who have no sympathy with it; many who have not only a firm belief in the sole unity and the fatherhood of God, but also a strong faith in the divine mission and authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, raising him high above good and gifted men of earlier or of later times, and trusting in him as the "sent of God." How far the Unitarian Church in England is yet sound in its Christian principles we have no means of determining. When, in this country, a stand was made against the intrusion of Parkerism, or something akin to it, those who were most prominent were assailed by the greater part of the Unitarian press as bigots, inquisitors, and persecutors, while the remaining portion of the press was *silent as the grave*. There may be—we trust there are—many as opposed as we to the spread of views which, if they continue to progress as they have done, will speedily undermine a fabric which has been, through centuries, reared by the learning and the courage, the labours and the sacrifices of holy Christian men; but it is not by timid silence and patient endurance any good will be effected, and we are glad to find that a better spirit is beginning to manifest itself. The report which our Intelligence department contains of the proceedings at the opening of the new church at Islington, shows that among the members of that congregation, and those who joined them on the interesting occasion, Christ is received and held forth as "the chief corner stone;" and we are pleased to find the *Christian Reformer*, in referring to that meeting, signifying its gratification at the Christian tone which prevailed,

and condemning, in somewhat decided terms, the efforts to spread the New Theology. He thus writes :—

“The earnest *Christian* spirit evinced on the occasion by the pastor of the church was very gratifying, and will, we trust, be responded to by thousands of the Unitarian body throughout the country. That manifestation is just now timely and important, when efforts are being industriously made by some, influenced by a different spirit, to hold up Theodore Parker as the expounder of Unitarianism. To the learning and genius of Theodore Parker we have always paid due respect; to his personal virtues we have always given admiration; but of his acceptance of Christianity as a system of *revealed* truth, we have never been able to see in his published works any satisfactory evidence. It is with regret we feel the necessity of making these remarks; but of this we feel assured, that if the more unreserved admirers of Theodore Parker succeed in their attempts to make the world believe that he is the accepted interpreter of the Unitarian faith, their success would lead to the entire alienation of many of the most estimable and earnest of our Unitarian friends from the denomination which they now adorn. But of such a lamentable result we entertain little apprehension.”

We thank the *Reformer* for this seasonable word; it encourages us to hope that matters may not be so bad as they have latterly appeared to be. Let this long-established organ of Unitarianism in England exercise the influence which its former services in behalf of our unpopular faith have justly given it, and it may do much to check the progress of those principles which are eating like a cancer into every portion of the Unitarian Church.

LETTER OF THE REV. S. C. NELSON TO “THE BOSTON CHRISTIAN REGISTER.”

OUR readers may remember that in the August number of the *Christian Unitarian* we published, from the *Boston Christian Register*, a letter addressed to that paper by the Rev. C. J. M'Alester, in which he exposed the injustice of a paragraph representing this magazine as “the organ of the intolerant party” of Non-Subscribing Presbyterians. In that letter Mr. M'Alester showed that he and those with whom he acted were in no sense intolerant, except so far as they insisted that all candidates for the sacred ministry in their Church should acknowledge Christ's divine mission, and declined to co-operate for the spread

of the Gospel with those "who saw no more authority in its revelations than in the Dialogues of Plato, or the poetry of John Milton." Such was the substance of Mr. M'Alester's letter, and the correctness of its statements, all who have watched the recent controversy must at once admit.

To this letter the Rev. S. C. Nelson, of Downpatrick, the present Moderator of the Presbytery of Antrim, has replied in a letter which appears in the *Register* of the 6th ult. This reply we would gladly publish in full, did the space at our disposal permit; but we shall extract two passages which embody its gravest accusations and its most remarkable statements. Mr. Nelson begins his letter thus—

"My attention has been directed to a letter which appeared in your paper of 21st June, signed by Rev. C. J. M'Alester, of Holywood, Co. Down, in which that gentleman, under pretence of refuting the charge that his magazine is the organ of the 'intolerant party' of Non-Subscribers in this country, goes on to describe his opponents in the present controversy as 'those whose principles drag Christianity down to a level with mere Deism,' and 'who see no more authority in the revelations of the Gospel than they do in the Dialogues of Plato, or the poetry of John Milton.'

"Had Mr. M'Alester confined these charges to any of the periodicals belonging to our denomination in this country, I would have treated the calumnies, as we have often already done, with that silence which would denote deserved contempt,—simply because we have all here become aware of his morbid appetite for slander;—sometimes direct slander, but more frequently in the form of suggestion and insinuation. The very name of his little magazine is a stiletto thrust against his brethren,—an insinuation that, although Unitarians, we are not Christians. I assert, with the most positive assurance, that there is not a single Deist amongst the ministers of our denomination; and I further assert, that to accuse us of undermining the divine authority of the Scriptures, by reducing them to a level with any human composition whatever, is a calumny as foul as it is false. Mr. M'Alester knows, and in this country would not dare to deny, that every member of our Presbytery—from which he has chosen to secede on a question of discipline—regards the testimony of Scripture with not less reverence than himself. But calculating, no doubt, that his device would not be detected and exposed, at least in America, he has most disingenuously attempted to enlist your sympathies and to influence your judgment, and, through you, to mislead the Unitarian public in the United States by raising, in his letter to you, an issue which is entirely outside the principle involved in the controversy."

If Mr. Nelson had carefully perused Mr. M'Alester's

letter, he would have seen that he did not represent him and his brethren of the Antrim Presbytery as Deistical, or as seeing no divine authority in the revelations of the Gospel; but he did state, and there is no difficulty in establishing the fact, that the principles of the Church, as Mr. Nelson interprets, or rather misinterprets them, would admit those who regard the Gospel as possessing no more authority from God than the writings of Plato or Milton. When Mr. Nelson says that there is not a single Deist in the denomination, if by "denomination" he means the Presbytery, Mr. M'Alester is quite disposed to agree with him: he never said, or insinuated, or thought that there was. With two of these ministers he was accustomed, till very lately, to interchange pulpit services, and he is not likely, intolerant as Mr. Nelson believes him to be, to admit Deists into his pulpit. Mr. Nelson himself, Mr. M'Alester has always understood to be an implicit believer in revelation; he remembers with pleasure the aid which he received from him in compiling a Catechism for children, now generally used in our congregations; and while Mr. Nelson was always regarded as Scriptural in his views, we have learned that during the last nine or ten months his preaching has been characterized by more than ordinary *unction*, and by a peculiarly *evangelical* tone. So much for Mr. Nelson's "soundness in the faith," which at once sweeps away his unjust accusation. But his liberality is much in advance of ours; for if any congregation in the Presbytery should choose a man as their minister, who believed that our blessed Lord possessed no divine mission and no supernatural knowledge, Mr. Nelson would ask no question, but would put his sanctified hands on him, and bid him "God speed." That is what the seceding brethren complained of; they could not remain in an ecclesiastical body so loose, and, as they believe, so unchristian in its principles.

Mr. Nelson, in the passage we have quoted, accuses Mr. M'Alester of having "a morbid appetite for slander, sometimes direct slander, but more frequently in the form of suggestion and insinuation," "of uttering gratuitous slander" and "calumny as foul as it is false." Most dignified language truly, and very becoming the Moderator of a Christian Church! Language some-

what similar, not quite so gross, was used by another minister towards Mr. M'Alester, in the warmth of an exciting debate; but how the Moderator, in a calm and sober hour, could pen such language, we are at a loss to conceive. There is something morbidly sensitive in Mr. Nelson and his friends in this controversy, hardly reconcilable with the enlightened opinions they profess, and the enlarged freedom they advocate. If any one speaks a word of honest and truthful rebuke against them, it is presently cried down as "slander" or "calumny." A short time ago Mr. M'Alester wrote a very polite note to a neighbouring minister, intimating that it would be more agreeable to himself, and possibly to some members of his congregation, to discontinue certain communion arrangements. Immediately an anonymous writer charged Mr. M'Alester with slandering his own congregation! Mr. M'Alester, in answer to the accusation, published the letter, and every impartial person must then have seen that it contained nothing even remotely bordering on slander. Mr. M'Alester has frequently spoken in the debates to which the recent controversy gave rise, and in other meetings, and he has more frequently written on the subject in the pages of the *Christian Unitarian*, and in separate pamphlets, and he challenges Mr. Nelson to put his finger on any sentence that, by a just interpretation of language, could be regarded either as slander or calumny. He has strongly protested against the tendencies to Deism which have been too plainly manifested of late in the Unitarian Church, and he has deplored the injury that is thus being inflicted on our holy and rational faith; he has argued again and again that the latitudinarian principles advocated in the Presbytery of Antrim open the Church to Sceptics and to Deists; he has rebuked Mr. Nelson for his most unseemly introduction of the name of Theodore Parker in an address when President of our Association, suggesting, as he did, to more than Mr. M'Alester, that the Church should admit such men into it, and that to exclude them from our pulpits would be intolerance; and more recently, in an article in this magazine, entitled "An Unspoken Speech," he has exposed a shameful trick which Mr. Nelson, or some one for him, practised on the innocent and confiding

Editor of the *London Inquirer*; but against Mr. Nelson or any of the brethren he has never uttered either slander or calumny. If Mr. M'Alester's arguments cannot be met in any other way than by raising the cry of slander, better they should not be noticed at all; for such language only recoils on those who so wantonly use it.

Mr. Nelson, in another part of his letter, thus represents the intolerance of the party to whom he is so bitterly opposed:—

“If I dared intrude upon your space, I could give in detail the history of many acts of vindictive persecution, exercised here against most deserving, pious, and earnest ministers of our denomination, carried on for years, with such persevering hostility as at length, for a professional livelihood, and for the peace and health of their families, shattered by these continued persecutions, to compel them to seek an asylum amongst our English brethren; and this simply because they would not bow down to arrogant dictation, and subject their consciences to human control. I might relate how this same party incited to acts of hostility and personal assault and obstruction in the discharge of his ministerial duties, a number of reckless men in the congregation of a most conscientious and unoffending and laborious Christian pastor, until he was compelled to apply to a court of equity, . . .”

Who, our readers will wonderingly inquire, were “the deserving, pious, and earnest ministers, the peace and health of whose families have been destroyed, shattered by continual persecution,” and “who have been compelled to seek an asylum among their English brethren.” We presume he refers to the Rev. D. Maginnis. Now, Mr. Maginnis left Belfast, not because he was compelled to go, but because he got a better congregation in England. We do not accuse Mr. Nelson of wilful falsehood in this extraordinary statement; but to those who know the facts of the case, the pathetic sketch which he draws—the offspring of his own excited imagination—will appear a most ridiculous caricature. So also must appear his reference to the case of Ballyclare, in which he represents the vast majority of the congregation, its respectability, wealth, and intelligence, as “*a number of reckless men*,” while they have been seeking merely to maintain their Christian principles, and preserve the Church property which their own liberality and that of their ancestors had created.

The other parts of the letter contain nothing new; the extracts we have made are its most remarkable por-

tions; much of the remainder is made up with clap-trap allusions to "inquisitorial assumption" and "church authority." It is truly sickening to find the cuckoo cry of "incipient creeds" and "priestly encroachment" raised against men who, it is well known, desire all ministers to have perfect freedom in the interpretation of Scripture, who do not even insist on the answering of so many questions, but who simply require, that all who will undertake the ministry in their body, shall explicitly acknowledge, in any words they please, their belief in the divine mission of Christ, and in the divine authority of revelation.

REPLY TO AN ELDER'S PROTEST.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE CHRISTIAN UNITARIAN."

SIR,—As no answer has appeared in the September number of *The Christian Unitarian* to "An Elder's Protest," and your criticism on the presentation and address to the Rev. David Gordon, the very disagreeable duty seems to devolve on me. I claim your indulgence and a brief space for the following observations in reply.

If the late Rev. James Davis had been living, and in the body, nothing earthly could have given him greater pain, more heartfelt grief, than this effeminate little controversy, in its beginnings and in all the stages of its progression up to the present time. As this truly pious man and model Christian pastor, happily for himself, had passed on from earth to heaven before it commenced, he cannot now draw aside the veil and tell those who would bring us back into bondage that he is with them and against us. He was the actual writer of the Remonstrance of 1829. That document is before the public, and it certainly embodies his opinions. Mr. Gordon and his congregation rigidly adhere to the principles there enunciated, because they are both Scriptural and reasonable. They interpret that Remonstrance according to its plain, honest meaning, and they believe they could arrive at no other conclusion than that they were one in spirit and in truth with the earnest independent man who wrote it.

But it may be said, "Oh! but do not you know that Mr. Davis, notwithstanding this Remonstrance, of which he was, doubtless, the author, asked certain questions in his ordination service." Yes, I am perfectly aware of this. In leaving the Synod of Ulster, he, like Luther and Calvin, and other Reformers, could not avoid carrying with him a little of the leaven of the old church. Some of the habits of his Presbytery, which did not require subscription to the Westminster Confession of Faith, as might be expected, he brought with him. To avoid the infidel brand, which at that time frightened

more than old ladies, there must be some equivalent for the terrible want of not having set your hand and seal to "the sum of saving knowledge," as set forth by godly and learned divines. What was that? Why, certain broad, general questions, which no Christian could gainsay or dispute, were to be asked. What these were to be, how many or how few, church history testifieth not. Individual wisdom was to dictate and guide. Mr. Davis was a man who never did anything by halves; instead of three, he asked fifteen or more questions. But cautiously, now. Be pleased to remember,—keep clearly in mind, for this argument has a most important bearing on this controversy,—Mr. Davis asked these questions at a time when the Remonstrant Synod—the Unitarian Church of Ireland—had no imperative law, indeed no law on the subject; when his own Remonstrance remonstrated against the imposition of such a practice; when every minister appointed to perform this duty was guided entirely by his own discretion. It was perfectly optional to ask or not to ask, to answer or not to answer. I believe it could be shewn, that in the one-half of the ordinations or installations, from 1829 till the new "Code of Discipline" was enforced, no questions were asked. It was not, at all events, the law of the Church, "I am bound to ask, and you are bound to answer." It was, "May I take leave to ask," never for the satisfaction of the Presbytery. There is only one case of that kind on record—a very late one. The Presbytery, as every minister at least well knows, has other and better means of being informed concerning the man—his character and principles—who is to be ordained. He has either been educated under their own care, and licensed by themselves as a Christian to be a teacher of Christianity, or he comes with letters dimissory from those by whom he has been educated and so authorised; and he comes to be put through a course of second trials, to test alike his aptness to teach and his soundness in the faith. We must take for granted,—we cannot avoid it,—the Presbytery is "satisfied," on the day on which it makes the appointments to ordain the minister elect. Then, as to the questions. The style in which Mr. Davis put his questions was, "May I take the liberty of asking you, for the satisfaction of the people over whom you were about to be appointed to minister," &c. The questions are as simple and plain, and quite as easily answered as the three questions of the present time. Any Christian of any school, new or old, could, with perfect truth, have answered them in the affirmative. I heard Mr. Davis commencing to ask these questions, and I heard him receive a respectful decided refusal to answer, because the person questioned said he believed it contrary to the fundamental principles of the Remonstrant Synod either to ask or to answer any questions. Notwithstanding, the ordination was not, as Mr. Finlay would have it, indignantly and abruptly broken off; it proceeded just as well as if this had not happened, and Mr. Davis was among the first to extend the right hand of fellowship to the stubborn one, in his own cordial manner.

On retiring from the presence of a large congregation, in company with the late venerated John Mitchel, Mr. Davis said, "Did not you tell me in the morning that you believed all the doctrines

implied in my questions?" "Yes," was the reply, "every one believes them; but assenting to them as a public confession of faith is quite a different matter. Shew your authority from your Master, from his apostles, or from your Church, and they can be easily answered on next Sunday." The old divine and the young one were standing face to face, not displeased with each other—the former not fully satisfied. Mr. Mitchel very kindly laid a hand on the shoulder of each, and in his own gentle and fatherly way said, "I have been thinking a good deal about this matter since it occurred. My son," said he to the youth, "I believe you are right. Father Davis, you must expunge these questions from that excellent discourse the next time you use it, and allow the minister elect to speak for himself, as in the case of Mr. Martineau, of Dublin, whose ordination service you have no doubt seen." I have a very distinct recollection of this transaction, more clear than of the affairs of yesterday. I am quite sure the above is its true purport, and I believe, also, the very words used. Mr. Davis preached that discourse only once afterwards. On our way to the place, I asked him how he meant to act. He said he would ask no questions, unless the person to be installed were perfectly willing and satisfied to answer them. It turned out that he was perfectly willing, and the questions were asked. This is a true statement. I have kept nothing back; I have added nothing. Had these two venerable, and about equally excellent men been living, and at their posts in our Church, I venture to affirm we would have had no unseemly disputations. They were both eminently men of peace. They would have counselled peace, and their counsel would have had its wonted influence and weight in the proper quarter.

The late William Glendy, of Ballycarry, whose acute and discerning mind very justly entitled him to be considered—as he was—an authority in all matters of church discipline, resisted, at an early meeting of "the New Code Committee" the first mention, I believe, ever made of having an authoritative test in our Church. I and others, who were present and who are now living, can testify this. But let the honoured dead rest. They were a hearty fraternity when here, united in one common end. They denied, with one voice and heart and soul, that any number of ministers, large or small, have a right to constitute themselves an authoritative, infallible tribunal; and to frame one, two, three, or it may be hereafter thirty articles; and to say, "Unless you profess faith in these articles which we choose for the present to enact, and do so to our satisfaction, you have no business in Christ's Church."

The few dogmas now set forth are such, indeed, as are held by every minister of our denomination. But there is a manifest aiming at something further. Give man but the authority, the right which some few claim, and it will soon be found, as history and experience prove, the clerical usurpation will creep on. The Papas will only require their dutiful sons to answer a few plain questions. This seems very fair and plausible. The sons will then believe they have full liberty to search and interpret the Scriptures for themselves. Yes, they have; but they must be careful to find in them only such doctrines and views as the spiritual Fathers are

satisfied they contain. The genuine Non-Conformists—Davis, Mitchel, Glendy—would have rejected with indignation this or any approach to this puny, narrow sectarianism. If I be asked, where do I find this narrow sectarianism? I answer, in the Unitarian Church; promulgated monthly by the press, in *ex-parte* statements, in flippant, insinuating, one-sided articles, which attempt to prove that one party holds the true faith, are sound believers and genuine Christians, and of course good and pious men; and another party infidels, claiming “the right of denying the Scriptures.” Our Church had once, even with its bitterest opponents, a high character for fair, calm argument, a love of truth, and the absence of clumsy calumny and misrepresentation. A very sad change has come over it, when the opinions, aims, and views of an opponent are wilfully misrepresented,—when the writer takes firm hold of his adversary’s argument as his own, and tries to persuade whoever will listen to him, that the Unitarian Church is full of infidels and sceptics, from whom men should sensitively shrink. It is a very melancholy spectacle to see our Irish brethren speaking of the Unitarian ministers of Lancashire and Cheshire as they have done. After bespattering them with a little stingy, doubtful praise, the sage conclusion is announced, that the end of all their good and great missionary labours “will only be the spread of a low form of Christianity hardly deserving the name.” Christian brethren of Lancashire and Cheshire, our retrograding friends are here oppressed with an incubus; their eyes are at present “holden,” so that they cannot see your unselfish, beneficent Christian exertions for the spread of true religion and the daily practice of its holy principles. In extenuation of the insult which you might suppose they intend to offer you, I have only to tell you, in order to secure your forgiveness, before the writers of such calumnies were seized with this mental blindness, they were among our most useful and respected ministers. No hard or uncharitable censures escaped their lips: instead of wasting their energies and time in idle, profitless strife, they were always ready for every good work. When the disease subsides, and when they shall again be left to the free, unoppressed use of their own faculties, which it is to be hoped may be soon, they will make the *amende honorable*. They will publicly confess the Unitarian ministers of England—“the salt of the earth,” with all its ancient savour,—a body of men who would do honour to any Church of any age, and who, by the living language of their labours and lives, prove themselves Christians, and thus best bespeak their Master’s praise.

It is my firm belief that God, for his own wise and holy purposes, has allowed this discipline of adversity to overtake us, in order that He may shake the dry bones into life and clothe them with new beauty and fresh strength. It might be well for the combatants on both sides of this contest each to single out his man and clearly define the subject in dispute, and so make an end of it in as short a time as reasonable. If it is to be, and continue as at present, manifestly about nothing more important than “the beggarly elements” of Christianity, it may spread itself over a long space of time. As long as the battle lasts, the combatants

may imagine they are spreading truth by announcing their own dogmas. But who ever heard of the sinful being thus reclaimed, or the lost ones thus brought back to duty and to God? Can the Saviour of men be honoured by that long and wearying strife concerning his person, his substance, his age, when the disputants have even divested themselves of that charity and forbearance towards each other which is the soul of his religion? In this controversy, the good we cannot at present see. I suppose Christianity will be preached and acted more zealously by and by. In the meantime, what is evil and eminently unchristian exists, and makes itself manifest throughout the entire Unitarian Church.—I am,
truly yours,

WILLIAM B. MINISS.

DROMORE, 15th September, 1862.

[In the foregoing reply of Mr. Miniss which we have considered it right to publish in full, although the latter part of it does not bear on the subject of dispute, several matters deserve attention.

Mr. Finlay, the most intimate friend of the Rev. J. Davis, and for many years an Elder of his Church, wrote a letter expressing his belief, "that so far from Mr. Davis sanctioning the admission into the ministry of any candidate who, from any motive or under any pretext, refused to declare his belief in the divine authority of Christianity, he would have rejected him as altogether unfit for the sacred office." Does Mr. Miniss not agree with Mr. Finlay in that belief? We think he does.

Mr. Miniss argues that Mr. Davis, in the Remonstrance which he drew up, maintains the principle that no questions should be asked, and yet admits that it was his uniform practice to ask questions—that is, he was so weak as, on the most solemn occasions, habitually to violate his own principles! Is that Mr. Miniss's estimate of the character of his former friend? But he suggests another plea for this alleged inconsistency. "To avoid the infidel brand, which at that time frightened more than old ladies, there must be some equivalent for the terrible want of not having set your hand and seal to 'the sum of saving knowledge.'" The rudeness of this remark we pass over in silence, but we must express our deep regret that Mr. Miniss should insult the memory of one whom he admits to have been "a truly pious man and model Christian Pastor"—by intimating that he asked questions *merely to deceive the ignorant*.

The fact stands, however, on Mr. Miniss's admission, that Mr. Davis asked questions. Was his doing so a violation of the Remonstrance which, with singular ability, he drew up? We think not. For that Remonstrance states "that the Scriptures of the

Old and New Testaments are the only Infallible Rule of Faith and Duty, and that it is the inalienable right of every Christian to search *those records of Divine Truth* for his own instruction and guidance," and further, "that we guarantee to congregations . . . the full, free, and unrestricted exercise of their unquestionable right to elect, in all cases of vacancy, ministers entertaining such views of *Divine Truth* as the congregations themselves may approve." Now it is plainly implied here that candidates for ordination must acknowledge Divine Truth, which, in the passages quoted, is necessarily equivalent to an admission of the divine authority of revelation,—the very point for which we contend; and Mr. Davis would most properly and consistently ask such questions as would elicit this confession. Beyond that, he had nothing to do with the views of the candidate, although the congregation had; and for their sakes, or at their desire, he may have put other questions.

Mr. Miniss seems to grant that the Presbytery have a right, as they have also an opportunity, of knowing the Christian views of candidates during the progress of their studies, or, in case of candidates from other bodies, during second trials. This is granting all we claim; and we entirely agree with him in thinking that some earlier occasion for being satisfied on this point would be better than the day of ordination in the presence of the assembled people. The Presbytery of Antrim, however, by its recent most extraordinary, and, as we think, most absurd and dangerous interpretation of its principles, virtually scouts Divine Truth; for it argues that the Presbytery has nothing to do with the opinions of candidates—has not even to be satisfied that they believe in the divine mission of Christ before they induct them into the ministerial office: so that it is quite possible that they might ordain a man who acknowledged nothing divine in Christ or Christianity. Would Mr. Davis have been with them in such latitudinarianism? Surely Mr. Miniss has more respect for his memory than to say or think so.

The conversation which Mr. Miniss details between Mr. Davis and Mr. Mitchel, of course we know nothing of; but we know enough of Mr. Mitchel to be assured that he would, just as little as Mr. Davis, have been a party to the founding of an ecclesiastical body which had not as its fundamental principle the acknowledgement of Christ's divine mission. We must therefore still contend that the effort, at the Banbridge soiree, to identify Mr. Davis's views with late proceedings in the Presbytery of Antrim, was unbecoming and unjust.

The complimentary references which Mr. Miniss makes to our-

selves we shall dismiss with only a sentence or two of notice. We have spoken very freely, not by insinuation, but in plain and intelligible terms, of the tendency to unbelief which at present appears in the Unitarian Church, and we have adduced evidence strong enough to satisfy every unprejudiced mind that our statements are well founded. We have not argued that all ministers in the Church should hold a particular creed of few or many articles; but we do maintain that none should be admitted into the pulpits of our Church who do not in some way, not necessarily by answering questions, acknowledge their belief in Christianity as a divinely authorized religion. We have never raised any question, as he strangely alleges, "concerning the person, the substance, or the age" of our blessed Lord; all we contend for is *his office as the Messiah*. If Mr. Miniss regards the fundamental doctrine of the gospel as only "beggarly elements"—a term by which Paul most happily designated the Jewish ritual when Christ established the New Covenant—his Christianity must have wofully degenerated since he left the ministry. Mr. Miniss objects to our criticism on the constitution of the Cheshire and Lancashire Assembly. Why does he not show wherein that criticism is incorrect, instead of merely growling at it. His charges against us of "calumny" and "wilful misrepresentation" do not, in any way, disturb us. We are accustomed to such assaults from those whom our statements most naturally provoke. Were our arguments weaker, they would be borne with better temper, and met with something more than vituperation.—ED. CH. UN.]

INTELLIGENCE.

BICENTENARY CELEBRATIONS.

IN many of the Dissenting pulpits in England, both Unitarian and Trinitarian, the 24th of August was celebrated by the preaching of appropriate discourses; and much may have been done by this means, as well as by the public meetings which have been held, to strengthen the cause of Non-Conformity and to advance the sacred principles of Religious Liberty. Some congregations have, most happily, availed themselves of the occasion to raise funds for the repairing of old and dilapidated chapels, while large sums have been subscribed to aid ministers, and otherwise to promote the interests of Dissent. The Unitarian Church has most properly done honour to those who, two centuries ago, in a season of per-

secution, kept the faith ; but wherever they have celebrated these worthies as Non-Subscribers, they have fallen into a great and a ridiculous error. The most novel and extraordinary mode of commemorating the event is the plan proposed by two Unitarian ministers, of raising a fund for the dissemination of Theodore Parker's writings, as preparing the way for Unitarian views of Christianity ! In the Unitarian Churches in Belfast, and other towns in the North of Ireland, as well as in Dublin, suitable reference was made to the occasion.

OPENING OF NEW UNITARIAN CHURCH, ISLINGTON.

On Wednesday, August 20th, the new Church erected in Islington by the congregation formerly assembling in Little Carter Lane, was opened for divine worship. The building has been erected at a cost of about £10,000, of which sum £6,500 was produced by the sale of the Old Carter Lane Chapel, and the remainder has been raised by the liberality of the members of the congregation and their friends. The style is Gothic, and there is a tower and spire rising to the height of 120 feet. There are five large stained-glass windows and several small ones ; these are contributed by various members of the Church—one in commemoration of the ejected clergy of 1662, representing the charge of Christ to his disciples "to go and teach all nations," and also the disciples "leaving all to follow him." The introductory religious service was conducted by the pastor, the Rev. H. Ierson, and the Rev. Thomas Madge preached from Ps. c. 4, "Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name." The discourse was admirably adapted to the occasion, comprising a forcible statement of the principles of Christian Unitarianism and the spirit of true Christian worship, and closing with an appropriate reference to the ejected Two Thousand, and an earnest exhortation to follow their example of fidelity to conscience.

At six o'clock, a tea meeting, attended by about 350 ladies and gentlemen, was held in the school-room adjoining the church, and a public meeting was afterwards held in the new building. The attendance was very large. Short and appropriate selections of music were performed during the evening by the choir.

The Rev. H. Ierson occupied the chair. After some introductory remarks, he said: You will have understood, from the whole character of the service of this afternoon, what is the precise nature of that worship which is to be carried on in this house of prayer. That it is to be specially and particularly Christian worship ; Christian in its enlightenment, as we trust and hope Christian in its sympathy, with every forward movement of the human mind ; Christian in its peculiar benevolence and in the catholicity of its spirit. It shall not be our fault if there be dissension between us and other Christian bodies. We hold the right hand of Christian fellowship out to all who profess and call themselves Christians. We desire to honour the truth in Christ, and it is with the most complete appreciation of all that we can perceive to be best and most Christian-like, that we contemplate the action of other Chris-

tian bodies ; and although there are many subjects in connection with the development of Christian belief, in the conception of which we materially differ from many of our fellow-Christians, yet we do trust that we and they are one in heart ; and that, though we may not habitually meet together as Christian brethren around the table of our common Lord, nevertheless we hope to meet in the better world hereafter. This is not the time to enter into specific explanations as to points of difference between us and others. Abundant opportunities will be afforded to us, which, we trust, we shall not neglect, to let the people of this neighbourhood distinctly understand what are the peculiar opinions which separate us from other bodies of professing Christians. Let it be enough, on the present occasion, to say that the views which we have been instructed in Christ to hold, are the best consolations of our own lives, and, as we conceive, most calculated to do honour to God and to advance the welfare of our fellow-men, and it is in this spirit that we shall ever labour, I trust, in carrying on the work of God. I do not doubt that many will be attracted to this place by the grandeur of its decorations, its general appearance, and the character of the service ; but, at the same time, let us all bear in mind that the great objects which we have to keep closely before us are those which have engaged the best men of all denominations from the beginning of creation to this hour—the worship of God himself in spirit and truth—the endeavouring to advance the cause of righteousness among men, and the desire, not to do honour to ourselves as a denomination, but to promote the glory of our common God. Let these be the sentiments with which we labour, and I am quite certain that the blessing of God shall rest upon us in all our future toil.

Mr. Alderman James C. Lawrence, Treasurer to the church, spoke to the sentiment, “ Prosperity to this Church and Congregation.” He said—You, my friends, who have watched the progress of this building from its commencement, can well feel how anxious we have been that it should be opened in this neighbourhood, where it would be viewed with widely different feelings ; but where we hope that, by the teachings within its walls, it will be the means of disabusing the minds of many who have misunderstood Unitarian principles, and where, in the heart of Islington, we shall be able, I trust, to maintain that those principles are in strictest accordance with the teachings of the Saviour, and the general tenor of the Scriptures. So long as we keep to the Scriptures, and prove, as we can, beyond a doubt, that our teaching is in accordance with the doctrines of Christ and his Apostles, no matter what may be the jealousies or misrepresentations which may be entertained against us, or the charges which may be made against us, we shall be at all times prepared to meet those charges, and whenever we are met openly we have no fear as to the result. I trust that this spirit will animate every one who worships in this building, and that, if a man enters it as a religious inquirer, it will be to inquire chiefly from that source from which alone every true and satisfactory answer can be obtained. In one of our hymns we speak of Christ being our head and chief corner

stone. Sure I am, that when strangers come to ask us what doctrines are taught within these walls, when they know that that is the ground upon which we take our stand, there are many who, though they will at first enter with timid steps, will come again and delight to worship with us.

The Rev. J. Panton Ham proposed thanks to the managers and architect of the building. As one who was brought up among the orthodox, he said, I am glad to find that the Christian element is so prominently put forward in this building. When I heard that it was to be called Unity Church, I was disposed to think there was something rather indefinite about the word, and that I should like to see more Christianity about it; but I was reminded by Mr. Alderman Lawrence that there was a text which expressed the idea of unity, not only as the oneness of God, but the oneness of that Lordship which we all recognize as constituting particularly our Christianity. "There is one God the Father, and one Lord Jesus Christ." I rejoice therefore that we have not only a Monotheistic temple, but a Christian church.

The meeting was also addressed by the Revs. T. Madge, J. C. Means, J. Robberds, T. L. Marshall, and others, and the proceedings closed with the doxology and benediction.

OBITUARY.

Died, on Wednesday, September 3rd, at her father's house, Ballygalloch, near Ballyclare, Sarah, daughter of Mr. James Laird, one of the Elders of the Ballyclare Non-Subscribing Congregation. This excellent young person was distinguished throughout her whole life for the graces of a pure, a loving, and truly Christian spirit: though cut off at the early age of twenty-three years, she had already manifested the fruits of the Gospel in her heart; and many besides her parents and near kindred will mourn her loss. She bore a long illness, of more than a year's duration, with exemplary meekness and patience; and bowing, with Christ-like submission, to a Heavenly Father's will, she slept in death to rise to God.

Died, September 7th, at her brother's house, Lisnashanker, Jane, eldest daughter of the late Rev. John Mulligan, Remonstrant Minister, Moira.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

The Letter from a Member of the Ballyclare Congregation and other articles are held over for want of space.

Communications for the Editor, to be addressed by post to Rev. C. J. M'Alester, Holywood; or, otherwise, to 28, Arthur Street, Belfast.

Orders for the work and business communications to be sent to the Agent of the Society, 28, Arthur Street.

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A RELIGION FOR THE DEATHBED.

THE great object of religion, as we gather it from the lips and the life of Christ, is to lead men into the ways of holiness, and help them to live in harmony with the will of God. Systems bearing the Christian name appear chiefly to regard the dying hour, and to contrive means whereby men, whatever their life may have been, may be ushered into the mansions of heaven. Hence the rite of Extreme Unction in the Church of Rome, and hence, also, the form of absolution in the Order for the Visitation of the Sick, as contained in the Prayer-Book of the English Church. No such system is taught by our blessed Lord, or by those Apostles who were inspired to instruct us in the Gospel faith. It is a remarkable and significant fact, that Christ, during his ministry, does not seem once to have visited the sick in order to afford them in a dying hour the spiritual consolation which his religion conveyed. That he did not thus visit the dying we dare not assert; but while we find him continually teaching the people how to live in the service of God and in the exercise of goodness, we do not find him giving special attention to those who were near to death. What a striking contrast to the conduct of his ministers in later times, who seem to think that their great business is with the dying, and not with those who are engaged in the busy and active scenes of life. A just inference, as we think, from what we have stated, is that a good life is the true and Christian preparation for a calm and peaceful death; and that the grand effort of the Christian pastor should be, in humble imitation of his divine master, and in accordance with his plainest teachings, to lead men, by the solemn warnings and the glorious promises of

the Gospel, to resist temptation, to flee from evil, and “by a *patient continuance in well-doing*, to seek for glory, honour, and immortality.”

But, while the Gospel is peculiarly designed, by its doctrines and promises, to promote holy living—that which we need to remove the great sources of misery and suffering which so largely prevail on this fair and beautiful earth—it breathes hopes and consolations powerfully suited to sustain and cheer the soul in the trying and solemn hour of death. Perhaps in nothing does our spiritual condition appear more in contrast with that of nations ignorant of the Gospel, than in the views which our holy faith unfolds of death, and the hopes which the dying believer is privileged to cherish. Death is a dark step, and the grave, to every thoughtful mind, is shrouded with awe. When we feel that our earthly race is nearly run, and that in a few brief hours we must close our eyes on all the objects that have interested us, and on all the friends that have loved us here, nothing but a religion whose torch lights the tomb, and throws its rays into the future life, can cheer or comfort us. Such a religion is Christianity, as it is plainly taught by Christ, and illustrated by his life and his death. Wherever we open the page of revelation we find standing prominently out the great doctrine of God’s fatherhood. Our Saviour continually presents it as the great sanctifying and consolatory truth which men should receive. This truth ministers unspeakable comfort to the dying. Through all the changes of our earthly career, and in all our trials, our heavenly Father has been with us, and his love has never failed. Many times his face has seemed to be hid from us; but still we believe He has loved us; and as we are his children, wayward and unworthy to be sure, but still his children, we cherish the belief that even death will not exclude us from his love; but that in death He will be near to us and will guard us. And if we have a child-like trust in his fatherly love, it may enable us to bear the weary and painful hours that often terminate our life, as we will believe that He does for each of his children what He knows to be best: the mind of Christ may thus be formed in us, so that we may from our heart say—“Thy will be done.”

But while the Christian reposes in the great and precious truth that God is his Father, he has, through Jesus Christ, clearer and fuller views of his beneficent plans and purposes than that blessed doctrine would reveal. Christ speaks to us as one that was about to meet death, and we find him, as he contemplates the scene of agony through which he was to pass, looking by the eye of faith on the life beyond. He does not speak of it as a hope, a probability, an expectation, but as a reality; not as a country of which he may have heard indistinct rumours, but as a land which he knew, a home to which he was returning. How the mind of the dying believer turns to Christ, and dwells on his words of faith and trust; and how they tend to inspire him with hopes full of immortality! But Christ does not speak merely for himself, and for his own assurance of rest and peace and glory in the life beyond. He says, "I go to prepare a place for you, that where I am there ye may be also." "In my Father's house are many mansions." Thus we are encouraged to believe that there is a home beyond the grave for those who have followed Christ and cherished his spirit here. It is to these promises of our Lord that Christians of every Church turn their most earnest thought, and from these they gather the most precious consolation. It is true that Christ does not inform us of the particulars of the future existence, and the occupations that may engage us, or the scene of our being. On these subjects there has been much speculation on the part of theologians, but they fail to determine anything. Yet how much of bliss is implied in being with Christ; and, if all disciples are with him, then they must also be with one another; and if with him, then also with the Father, for Christ is with Him and nearest to Him. What a train of comforting and ennobling thoughts is thus suggested; and how, as we follow them out, death, with all its terrors, seems to be **swallowed up in victory!**

But if only disciples shall be admitted into that higher life, who can venture to hope that he shall be admitted to the blessed company? Our fears on this point may be greatly allayed by considering that Christ does not judge as some of his Churches do, and exclude from his presence those that belong not to the communion of Rome; or

those that accept not the doctrine of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, as it is set forth in the Athanasian Creed; or those that hold opinions which many may condemn as heretical. A more reasonable ground of apprehension might arise from the consciousness which all must feel that in spirit and in life they have not been worthy disciples of their Lord. And perhaps at no time does that feeling rise more painfully in the mind than when approaching death leads us more clearly to perceive the value of goodness, and more distinctly to contemplate the many imperfections of our life. But Christ is not to be regarded as a severe judge, but a merciful Saviour. Few indeed of those who seek here to follow him, though imperfectly, would have been rejected and condemned by him, had they been with him in the days of his earthly sojourn: and we know that to the penitent and humble believer he offers free and full forgiveness. It is not reasonable to suppose that the mere dissolution of the body could fit the soul of each for the highest and purest communion with Christ and the spirits of the just made perfect; nor can we believe that all may at death be capacitated for equal bliss: but the humble disciple may rest in the comforting and sustaining faith that the love of the Father and the compassion of the Son, which blessed him on earth, will beam more brightly upon him in the life beyond.

We do not stop to combat the objection often urged, that some Christians expect to be entitled to the bliss of heaven by their good works. We do not believe that **any** sincere disciple of Christ, of any denomination, ever entertained so presumptuous a hope. Everything we have in this life is the free gift of God, and our hopes for the life to come are only from the mercy of God as revealed to us in Jesus Christ.

The grounds of consolation and hope which the religion of Christ affords to the dying are independent of those peculiar dogmas which churches and creeds have raised into importance. They have nothing to do, for example, with Christ's godhead. If Christ were God,—what he never says he is, and often says he is not,—his words could have no more weight than they bear when he speaks as God's Son, sanctified and sent by him to save the world. They have nothing to do with a Trinity of per-

sons; men in a dying hour do not perplex themselves with a question so unprofitable. They have nothing to do with a vicarious atonement; enough for the living and the dying to know and feel that God is in Christ reconciling the sinner to himself. Neither are they calculated to excite those wild and fanatical scenes which a deathbed sometimes presents, when the mind is weakened by disease, and the imagination inflamed by extravagant pictures of heaven and of hell. The death of our blessed Redeemer exhibits, at least in one view, the spirit which the dying believer should seek to possess; and although it would be profanely presumptuous to compare with his death that of his most earnest and devoted disciple, yet we should seek to possess his mind, and to cherish the piety and trust which are so brightly conspicuous in the crucified Saviour.

Christian Unitarianism, reverently acknowledging Christ's divine mission, and gratefully receiving all the revelations he has made of God's fatherhood and boundless mercy—of reconciliation for the penitent, and of a future life,—distinctly sets forth all the grounds which the Gospel exhibits of comfort and hope in the prospect of death. It has been sometimes tauntingly said, that the Unitarian faith may be very good to live by, but it is no religion to die by. We might fairly enough argue that the religion that is best for the life must be the best for the deathbed; but happily there is evidence enough in the records that are preserved of the deathbeds of Christian Unitarians to show, that, while the faith they cherished produced eminent holiness of life, it also supported them, and yielded unspeakable comfort in death. Reference might be made to martyrs and confessors of earlier and later times, who found in our simple and Scriptural faith, joy and consolation in the severest privations and sufferings: and from the biography of those of our "household of faith" who have been remarkable for their goodness, we might fill many pages with deathbed scenes rich in Christian trust, submission, and hope; but we shall content ourselves with quoting the following extracts from the narrative of the last days of Mary Ware, an American lady, the widow of Dr. Henry Ware, Jun., a woman whose whole life was fragrant with piety and

good works, and whose end, as the result of an earnest Christian life, was eminently peace:—

“If ever there was evidence of the reality and influence of the Christian faith in itself, or of a peculiar form of it, it might be shown here. The believer and sufferer thought less of any peculiarities, than of the essential spirit and power. But all that she had held, she retained, and found sufficient,—unfailingly, abundantly sufficient. And it was a blessing to her in her last days, to know that others of the same faith felt its sustaining power, and shared with her in its peace and joy.”

“With great clearness, and in words that were retained, she had defined to a friend and clergyman, a short time before, her views of the world to which she was drawing near. ‘I find myself thinking very little of the future world as to its ‘circumstances.’ I mean, I am surprised to find how little *curiosity* I feel about it. I trust myself with my Father, both now and hereafter. Whatever is best for me then, as now, I feel sure will be ordained. If we suffer here, it is by a Father’s hand, it is in wisdom and mercy. If we suffer there, it must be no less so. No, I desire to suffer in the coming world, as in this, if He pleases, if He will that I should. I have a perfect trust and confidence in God. Ah, Mr. H—, it is the *self-surrender*, a renunciation of our will for God’s, which is the thing. If we can only do this truly, it is all. But how much it means!”

“‘The afternoon of the day before she died,’ writes her pastor, ‘I was told that she had expressed a desire to see me. As I entered the room, her face was perfectly radiant. She knew that her hour had come, and she would say a few last words of kindness to us all. ‘I wish to thank you,’ she said, ‘for all that you have done,—every thing. And it is all here,’ placing her hand on her breast, ‘it is all here. This peace, this peace! it is all here.’ ‘Yes,’ I replied, ‘if we seek we shall find it.’ ‘I have not sought it,’ she said quickly. ‘It came. It was sent.’ ‘Come with a *smile*,’ she said to one whom she had called to bid her farewell. And her chamber then seemed to us more as a forecourt of heaven, than a painful approach to the tomb.’”

“On a lovely April day, the windows of her room all open that she might breathe freely, she looked up at one who entered, and said with a smile, ‘What a beautiful day to go *home*!’ Near the end, one at her side said to another, in tears, ‘How much stronger she is than we are!’ ‘I am so much nearer the Source of strength,’ she whispered. Her suffering was acute, but her thought and care were more for others than herself, to the last.”

Christian Unitarianism was the system of religious truth which formed the character and regulated the life of this sainted woman, and as we see its influences brightening her last hours, and filling her soul with serene peace and joyous hope, we may justly maintain that it is not only a religion for the life, but also a *Religion for the Deathbed*.

AN AUTUMN EVENING.

BEHOLD the western evening light,
 It melts in evening gloom ;
 So calmly Christians sink away,
 Descending to the tomb.

The winds breathe low ; the withering leaf
 Scarce whispers from the tree ;
 So gently flows the parting breath,
 When good men cease to be.

How beautiful on all the hills
 The crimson light is shed :
 'Tis like the peace the Christian gives
 To mourners round his bed.

How mildly on the wandering cloud
 The sunset beam is cast !
 'Tis like the memory left behind
 When loved ones breathe their last.

And now, above the dews of night,
 The yellow star appears ;
 So faith springs in the heart of those
 Whose eyes are bathed in tears.

But soon the morning's happier light
 Its glory shall restore,
 And eyelids that are sealed in death
 Shall wake to close no more.

W. O. B. PEABODY.

ANNE ASKEW.

ANNE ASKEW has been always regarded as one of the most interesting and intrepid women that ever lived, or that ever died, in the maintenance of simple Gospel truth. The story of her cruel persecutions has been told by herself, and was first printed at Marburg, in the year 1547. Her narrative was afterwards published by John Foxe in his great work entitled "*Actes and Monuments of Martyrs*," and from that source, it has since re-

appeared in various other forms. She was the second daughter of Sir William Askew, or Ayscough, of South Kelsey, in Lincolnshire, and was married, at an early age, to a gentleman named Kyme, from whom she was obliged to separate in consequence of his intolerant treatment, on her change of religious belief. John Bale, who afterwards became Bishop of Ossory, accompanied her autobiographical statements with a commentary, which contains the following passage in reference to her unfortunate marriage:—"Concerning Master Kyme, this should seem to have been the matter. Her father, Sir William Askew, Knight, and his father, old Master Kyme, were sometye of familiarite and neighbours within the county of Lincolnshire. Whereupon the said Sir William covenanted with him for lucre to have his eldest daughter (Martha) married with his son and heir, as, in an ungodly manner, it is in England much used among noble men, and it was her chance to die afore the time of marriage. To save the money, he constrained this daughter (Anne) to supply her room, so that, in the end, she was compelled against her will or free consent to marry with him. Notwithstanding, the marriage once past, she demeaned herself like a Christian wife, and had by him, as I am informed, two children. In process of time, by oft reading the Sacred Bible, she fell clearly from all old superstitions of papistry to a perfect belief in Jesus Christ, whereby she so offended the priests, that he, at their suggestions, violently drove her out of his house."

This indignity finally induced his wife to seek a divorce, and to devote her life and energies to the grand movement which was then being initiated, and which has ever since been known as the *Reformation*. Her unworthy husband was determined, probably from purely selfish motives, that he would oppose her suit for a divorce, whilst his priestly coadjutors were equally decided against her missionary efforts. He represented that she had abandoned her house without sufficient cause, and they (the priests) endeavoured to create the impression that she was no better than she should be. Accordingly, the very first objection made against her, when brought before the Council at Greenwich, as a heretic, was this apparent

desertion of her husband. To use her own words—"I was asked of Master Kyme. I answered, that my Lord Chancellor knew already my mind on that matter. They, with that answer, were not contented, but said it was the King's pleasure that I should open the matter to them. I answered them plainly that I would not do so; but if it were the King's pleasure to hear me, I would shew him the truth. Then they said it was not meet for the King with me to be troubled. I answered, that Solomon was reckoned the wisest King that ever lived, yet misliked he not to hear two poor common women; much more his grace a simple woman and a faithful subject. So, in conclusion, I made them none other answer in that matter." Her replies, throughout all her subsequent examinations on religious questions, were equally self-possessed and intrepid. Indeed, the members of that inquisitorial Council were no match for her in the discussion of those doctrines which then began to divide the Christian world. The result of their investigations and deliberations is contained in the following record, so disgraceful, through all time, to their characters as men and professing Christians:—"At Greenwich, June 19th, 1546. "Thomas Keyme, of Lincolnshire, who had married one Anne Ascue, called hether, and likewise his wiffe, who refused him to be her hosbande without any honest allegacion, was appointed to return to his countrey tyll he should be eftsoones sent for; and for that she was very obstynate and headdy in reasonyng of matters of relygeone, wherein she shewed herselfe to be of a naughty oppinyon, seeing no perswasione of good reason could take place, she was sente to Newgate, to remaine there to answeere to the lawe." In other words, she was handed over, without any scruple or compunction on the part of her persecutors, to be dealt with according to the cruel provisions of the infamous Act of the *Six Articles*.

Perhaps not one of Anne Askew's biographers has given sufficient prominence to her connection with the Protestant party at court, and her influence even with Queen Katherine Parr. Her "ghospelling" and distributing of controversial books had raised up, even in the royal household, several warm sympathisers, especially among

the court ladies. But this distinction only added to her tribulation, as she was illegally and most grievously tortured in prison, for the purpose of extorting from her information respecting her friends. The Queen herself was so conversant in the various disputed questions of the time, that Henry once exclaimed, "*Your are become a doctor, Kate*"; and one of the gravest charges brought against her afterwards was because of certain heretical books, sent by Anne Askew, having been found in her closet. The names of the other sympathising ladies of rank are preserved in the following passage of Anne Askew's narrative:—"Then came Rich and one of the council charging me upon my obedience to shew unto them if I knew man or woman of my sect. My answer was that I knew none. Then they asked me if my lady of Suffolk, my lady of Sussex, my lady of Hertford, my lady Denny, and my lady Fitzwilliams. I said if I should pronounce anything against them I should not be able to prove it. Then said they unto me, that the King was informed that I could name, if I would, a great number of my sect. I answered that the King was as well deceived in that behalf as dissembled with in other matters." When pressed to state from whom she had received relief in prison, she replied "there was a man in a blue coat which delivered me ten shillings, and said that my lady of Hertford sent it me; and another in a violet coat gave me eight shillings, and said my lady Denny sent it me. Whether it were true or no I cannot tell, for I am not sure who sent it me, but as the men did say."

The ladies above-named, who thus early adopted the principles of the Reformation were, 1. *Katharine Willoughby d'Eresby*, who became the last wife of Charles Brandon, duke of Suffolk. She subsequently married a gentleman named Bertie, and her history, as related by Holinshed and Foxe, is well known. 2. *Anne Calthrop*, daughter of Sir Philip Calthrop, and second wife of Henry Ratcliffe, second Earl of Sussex. In 1552, she was imprisoned on an absurd charge of sorcery; and debarred by act of Parliamant from jointure and dower in consequences of her Protestant opinions. 3. *Anne Stanhope*, countess of Hertford, and afterwards duchess of Somerset. This lady diligently studied her Bible and became a con-

scientific opposer of the pervading theology of her day. 4. *Joan Champernoun*, daughter of Sir Philip Champernoun, of Modbury, county Devon, and wife of Sir Anthony Denny, a privy councillor to Henry VIII. She died in 1553. 5. *Jane*, daughter of John Ormond, and wife of Sir William Fitzwilliams.

In addition to the vast materials published by Foxe in his *Actes* and *Monuments*, he had collected various documents which were not used by him in the preparation of his great work, chiefly in consequence of their not having come into his hands in due time. These documents are fortunately preserved in the British Museum, and a few of them have been printed by the *Camden Society*, in 1860. Among the latter is one entitled "*The Reminiscences of John Louthe*, Archdeacon of Nottingham, written in the year 1579. A chapter of these Reminiscences is headed "*More of Mrs. Anne Askewgh*," by which the writer means more than had been already published by John Foxe respecting this devoted martyr. Louthe thus speaks from his own recollections of her first examination in the Tower:—"My Lorde Mayre, Sir M. Bowes, syttyng with the cownsell, as most meetest for his wisdome, and seeing her standyng apon lyff and dethe, 'I pray yow (quod he) my lordes, gyve me leave to talke with this woman.' Leave was granted. *Lord Maiore*. Thou folyshe woman, sayest thou that the prestes can not make the bodye of Chryste? *A. Askowghe*. I say so my lorde, for I have redd that God mayd man; but that man can make God I never yet redd, nor I suppose ever will red yt. *L. Maiore*. No? Yow folyshe woman: after the words of consecratione, ys it not the Lorde's bodye? *A. Askowghe*. No, it ys bot consecrated bredd, or sacramentall bredd. *L. Maiore*. What, yf a mowse eate it after the consecratione, what shall become of the mowse? *A. Askowghe*. What shall become of hur say yow, my lorde? *L. Maiore*. I say that that mowse is damned. *A. Askowghe*. Alacke, poore mowse! By this tyme the lordes had ynoughe of my lord maiore's divinitie, and perceavyng that some cowlde not keape in their lawghyng, proceeded to the butchery and slawter that thei entended afore thei came thither."

The writer, Louthe, witnessed this scene, and was, no doubt, one of those who could hardly restrain their derision of the lord mayor's ridiculous, though probably well meant efforts, in divinity. Anne Askew's own account of this matter is as follows:—"Besides this my lorde maior layed one thing to my charge, which was never spoken of me, but of them (her priestly inquisitors); and that was, *whether a mowse, eating the host, received God or no?* This question did I never aske, but in deede they asked it of me, whereunto I made them no answer, but smiled." When sent back to prison she was followed by a priest, who took up the argument about the mouse more in detail. "Fourthly, he asked if the host should fall, and a beaste did eat it, whether the beaste did receive God or no? I answered, 'seeing you have taken the paines to ask the question, I desire you also to assoile it yourselfe, for *I* will not doe it, because I perceive you come to tempt me.' And he said it was against the order of schooles that he which asked the question should answer it. I told him I was but a woman, and knew not the course of schooles."

After her condemnation she was subjected to the rack, "and thereupon," says she, "they kept me a long time, and, because I lay still, and did not cry, my Lord Chancellor (Wriothesley) and master Rich tooke pains to rack me in their own hands, till I was nigh dead."

Louthe states his recollection of the final scenes in these words: "I being alyve must neades confesse of hur now departed to the Lorde, that the day afore her exequutione, and the same day also, she hadd an angel's countenance, and a smyling face; for I was with Lassells, Sir Geo. Blagg, and the other, and with me two of the Throkmortons, Syr Nicholas being one and Mr. Kellum (Kenelme) the other, by the same token that one unknown to me sayd, 'ye are all marked that come to them,' take heed to your lyffes. . . . When the hour of darknesse came, Mrs. A. Askow was so racked that she could not stand, but the dounge carte (in which she was carried to the stake) was holden up between two sarjantes, and after the sermone ended, they put fyar to the reedes; the cowncell lookyng on, and leanyng in a wyndow by the Spytle (Hospital)." Three other Martyrs were brought

from Newgate and burned at the same time and place with Anne Askew. Their names were Nicholas Belenian, a priest, of Shropshire, John Adams, a tailor, and John Lascelles, a gentleman of the household of King Henry VIII. Of the latter, Louth has recorded the following reminiscence: "And Mr. Lassels, a gentleman of a ryght worshipfull house of Gatforde ny (nigh) Wursoppe, mownted up in to the wyndow of the little parloure by Newgate, and there satt; and by hym Syr Georg. Mr. Lassells was mery and cherefull in the Lorde, commyng from the hearyng of sentense of his condemnatione, and sayd these wordes: "My Lorde byshoppe wolde have me confesse the Romane church to be the Catholycke church, but that I can not, for yt ys not trew."

Anne Askew perished in the prime of her youth, being only twenty-five years of age at the time of her martyrdom. Her mother had died when Anne was a child, and her father, who urged her into her unfortunate marriage, did not live to witness the terrible fate of his daughter. She was therefore an orphan, and had no near relatives to speak to her in her last moments. Her family connexions endeavoured to ignore all memory of her existence, and actually omitted her name afterwards in their genealogical records!

One can hardly imagine that such scenes have really occurred in England, with England's King conniving, and England's Lord Chancellor plying the instruments of torture with his own hands, and England's nobles and priests arrayed in fiendish approval.

V.

ENGLAND'S DIFFICULTY, IRELAND'S OPPORTUNITY.

THE time was when the well-known phrase which we have written above was seldom absent from the platform and the press in this country; when it was shouted forth exultingly in the fervid oratory of would-be "patriots" to stimulate national animosity against the "Saxon;" when it was freely employed as a watchword, by unscrupulous newspaper writers, to rekindle the flame of rebellion against British rule. The words themselves may not be

now in such frequent use; but it is much to be feared that their spirit still actuates the rabid partisans of extreme factions on both sides at the present time. It fomented their incessant quarrels, urges them continually, by processions, demonstrations, and disgraceful and alarming party riots, to disturb the peace and welfare of the country, to embarrass the Government, to make the maintenance of law and order in this land ever the hardest task to British statesmen, and to keep Ireland and the Irish always a rankling thorn in the side of the United Kingdom.

Notwithstanding, we believe the phrase is still a good one, being capable, at the present juncture, of a very different and a much better application, which it is our purpose briefly to suggest to the readers of *The Christian Unitarian*.

We must well remember—ungrateful indeed should we be ever to forget it!—during the period of Ireland's difficulty in 1846 and 1847, the spontaneous flow of England's sympathy and benevolence which found its way to this country in large and substantial charities for the relief of our distressed and starving people. The whole nation was roused to sympathy and generosity; and in addition to numberless private gifts, no less than *two millions* of English money was subscribed to relieve Irish destitution. The benefactions were not limited to class or station. High and low shared alike in the good Christian work. The great statesman sacrificed the political connexions and the cherished convictions of a lifetime to throw open, by one act of legislation, the ports of our country, for the admission, duty free, of food to supply the wants of our famishing population. British merchants and agriculturists contributed of their abundance and their competence; and artisans and operatives freely cast in their mite, from the hard-earned products of their daily toil.

Thanks to a kind Providence, and to this timely aid, the great distress was alleviated, the dark cloud at length passed away, and Ireland now enjoys a position of comparative prosperity and comfort. But how is it with her benefactors? I would briefly call the attention of our readers to the circumstances in which so many of our English fellow-countrymen are now unfortunately placed.

Owing to the unnatural contest still raging in America, the material for the greatest manufacture of England, the cotton, which had been chiefly procured from the Southern States of the Union, and on which above 4,000,000 of the English people were more or less depending for employment and support, has completely failed. Great numbers of mills in Lancashire and the surrounding districts are consequently idle, and more than 300,000 operatives and their families are thus thrown out of employment, many of them being destitute of all means of support, and not a few in a state of approaching and even actual starvation.

These well-known facts, which now constitute England's great difficulty, are, we believe, a sufficient apology for our suggesting that they also form, in the higher and better sense of the words, "Ireland's Opportunity." A call is thus made on the practical sympathies and the liberal assistance of the people of this country, to which, if we do not freely and generously respond, we shall be deservedly disgraced in the eyes of the civilized world.

Common gratitude for the benevolence which we ourselves so largely experienced in our time of need, sympathy with our distressed fellow-countrymen, and true Christian charity, should urge all classes and denominations of Irishmen to come forward and contribute, according to their means, towards relieving the distress of the cotton operatives in England. If any additional motive were needed to stimulate our sympathies, it would be found in the reflection, that the persons to be assisted are proving themselves worthy of all support. We cannot too much admire the patient resignation, manly fortitude, and sound common sense exhibited by these cotton-workers under their privations.

We know that the English character is quick to resent real or supposed injury and injustice; yet here we see thousands of families of the humbler class quietly bearing, without complaint or outrage, the loss of all remunerative employment,—of every material comfort—of every means of support—the gradual consumption, even to the last farthing, of the savings of years of thrifty industry—and all the hard experiences of actual poverty and want,—because, in the exercise of their sound English sense, they

feel that for these things neither their employers nor the Government can be justly held responsible; that they proceed from events beyond their control. It is a grand moral spectacle; one well worthy of our serious contemplation; one which should make us feel it a *privilege* to have the opportunity of assisting such men in their extremity.

It is not for us to stop to inquire whether the employers themselves are, in all cases, fully taking their share in relieving the wants of their operatives. Of this we are not in a position to judge; but we have no doubt that, in general, they will be found at their post, and nobly doing their duty. But whether or not, it cannot in the least relieve us from the obligation so clearly belonging to us in this respect. It is pleasant, therefore, to see this obligation being cheerfully acknowledged and acted upon in some of our large towns, where liberal contributions are pouring in for this purpose. It would be desirable, however, to see the matter generally taken up in our provincial towns and country districts, and the various churches of the country taking part in the good work. The Episcopalian Church, we are glad to see, is doing so, collections being made in the various parishes, at least in this part of Ireland, by diocesan authority. We are not aware that the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church has, as yet, moved officially in the matter, although collections have been made in some of the wealthier congregations of that body. In our own Church, we do not think that, beyond individual subscriptions to the general fund now being raised in Belfast, anything has yet been done.

We desire, therefore, to bring the subject before our congregations, through the medium of the *Christian Unitarian*, and to rouse them to united action. It is most desirable that, on this subject at least, our Churches should be united, and that we should not allow ourselves, and the extent of our sympathy and benevolence, to be represented to our brethren in England by a few scattered and scanty contributions. We boast that our Church is liberal and charitable in proportion to its means; let us not, then, be found wanting when such an important occasion is afforded us of proving it to the world.

We trust we may not be thought out of place in suggesting this matter as specially fitting for the consideration of the Committee of the Non-Subscribing Association, that they may take means for having collections made in all our congregations, placing the amount contributed in the hands of the worthy Treasurer of the Association, either to be added to the Belfast general subscription, with the name of each congregation and the amount of its subscription, or for direct transmission to England, as may be thought fit.

We trust the suggestion which we have here ventured to offer may be received and acted upon by the Association in the spirit in which it is given. It is, unfortunately, true that the area of our possible co-operation is small enough, and seems to be daily becoming more and more contracted. Let us not, then, wilfully narrow it still further by refusing to work together for a good and benevolent object, in the propriety of which we must all agree.

J. A. C.

OUR NAME.

GRAVE objections have been made by some unfriendly critics to the name by which our magazine is designated—*The Christian Unitarian*;—it is regarded by them as ungrammatical, novel, and offensive. Let us consider what ground there is for these objections: for while we do not attach much importance to a name, and seek only to employ such a title as will distinguish our periodical, and suggest at least the principles and views which it is set on foot to advocate, it would be foolish to employ any name which would misrepresent our principles, or give unnecessary offence even to our opponents.

It has been alleged that the expression, *Christian Unitarian*, is ungrammatical, and that Christian should be the noun, and Unitarian the adjective. Why? Is Christian not frequently employed as an adjective? We think so, and a very expressive adjective it is. That *Unitarian Christian* is a more common term we fully admit; both,

however, are perfectly correct, and each will recommend itself as preferable to the other, according to the point of view from which our denominational opinions are regarded.

But it is further objected, that the term is a novel one. It may be so in the district in which the objectors reside, or in the small sphere of their knowledge; but those who have been familiar with the history of Unitarianism in these countries, and with the writings of its ablest and most earnest advocates, know very well that the term is by no means new. The Rev. J. Scott Porter, for example, at a time when those who are now so bitter against him, looked to him as an authority, and were proud of him, published a tract, entitled an "Outline of Christian Unitarianism." That admirable tract was widely circulated, and we doubt not that some of these objecting gentlemen were very active in giving it publicity, and found no fault with the title, either as ungrammatical or as new. The Rev. George Harris also continually employed the same term to designate those views of which he was, for so many years, in Great Britain, one of the most fearless, eloquent, and successful expounders. In the very first paragraph of his introduction to the *Christian Pioneer*, the first number of which was published so far back as October, 1826, he states that "the work shall be devoted to free inquiry, and the promulgation, defence, and illustration of the principles of *Christian Unitarianism*." Mr. Harris habitually employed the term, and one of his best discourses bears that distinct title. Other authorities might be quoted to the same purpose, and among them the Rev. D. Maginnis, who entitles a sermon published some three years ago, "*Characteristics of Christian Unitarianism*;" but we have surely adduced evidence enough to show how futile is the objection of novelty.

But it appears that our name is offensive to certain parties, and the Moderator of the Presbytery of Antrim says that "it is a stiletto thrust against our brethren,—an insinuation that although Unitarians they are not Christians." Why these gentlemen should be so very sensitive, we cannot understand. They say that they are Christians, and we have never doubted their word, or

questioned their faith; but still we maintain that our title is a good one, and for our purpose most appropriate. Our objectors must be aware that there are other Unitarians than those who accept Christianity in its divine authority and supernatural revelations as their religion. The Jews are Unitarians, and so are the followers of Mahommed: they believe, as we do, in the strict unity of God, as opposed to a Trinity of persons; and one of the strongest arguments for the correctness of our interpretation of Scripture on this point is, that the Jews never drew from the Old Testament any idea of Three persons in the Godhead; nor did those of them who embraced Christ's Gospel, object to him and his apostles that they taught any doctrine which clashed with their cherished belief in one God in one person. Then there are Unitarians who are not Christians: hence the propriety of our name.* We desire to advocate *Christian Unitarianism*.

There are, however, more than Jews and Mahomedans that are Unitarians, and yet not Christians;—we mean those who are Deistical in their opinions. Hobbes, Tindal, and Morgan, Paine and Voltaire were Unitarians, but we could not say that they were Christians; and we suppose that even those who take more enlarged views of Christianity than we do, will agree with us in thinking that there are those living in these countries, and enjoying that constitutional protection and that religious liberty to which they are as well entitled as the most orthodox Christians, who yet deny all authority in the religion of Christ save that which the Deistical writers referred to would have admitted. Then our name is not unmeaning; nor is it at the present time unsuitable; for we see an obvious tendency in the Unitarian Church to drift away from the divine authority of the Christian revelation, and sink into a form of religion hardly to be distinguished from Deism. This tendency we deplore, and we desire to resist it. We hold the doctrine of God's unity, and we endeavour to maintain it; but we desire to stamp it with the impress of Christ's authority, and to contemplate

* The *London Inquirer*, alluding lately to our magazine, says—
 “The very title is a misnomer. . . . implying that there are some Unitarians who are not Christians.” Most sage critic!

the Father through him ; therefore we call our humble magazine the *Christian Unitarian*. This title indicates the principles we hold, and the work at which we aim.

REVIEWS.

MEDITATIONS ON DEATH AND ETERNITY, *translated from the German by* FREDERICA ROWAN. *Published by Her Majesty's gracious permission.* 8vo., pp. 385. London: Trübner & Co. 1862.

THIS is in many respects a remarkable, as it is a valuable, work. It is remarkable from the notice prefixed that "Her Majesty had graciously granted permission to publish these selections, originally printed for private circulation only." From this we may fairly conclude that Her Majesty had experienced spiritual consolation in her bereavement from these meditations, and that she wished that her subjects should be, as it were, identified with her in these religious feelings, by allowing them to be disseminated through the press. This is not the first instance of a strong desire to promote a religious spirit among her people ; and it is very pleasant to observe that, as in the other case, so in this there is great purity of religious taste and religious feeling. The representations given of the paternal character of God—of the relation of Jesus Christ to God—the whole scheme of redemption, &c., &c.—are Scriptural and edifying, and the meditations on death, the soul, and immortality are very consolatory. We have not room for extracts, which would require to be long, in order to give a proper idea of the connexion. But we may give one extract out of the meditation, "God is Love," which will give some intimation of the spirit and doctrinal views that pervade the work :—

"When the heathen found it impossible to reconcile the goodness of God with the Evils of Life, he invented, as a means of explaining the contradiction, a second Deity, an evil being, but he did not accuse the God of Goodness of being the Author of Evil, and did not attribute to Him low human or rather animal passions. Many Christians, on the contrary, who, as such, believe of course in one God only, seeing the many ills that afflict humanity, explain these by conceiving of God, as a God of vengeance, an angry God, a

jealous and inexorable God, who punishes the faults of a moment (for is man's life on earth more than a brief moment?) with the sufferings of eternity, and who takes revenge for the sins of the fathers on their innocent offspring—actions which, if committed by a human being, would rightly be considered as execrable and unjustifiable. These ideas of the Most High originated at a period when the human race was still in its infancy, and when men hardly formed a higher conception of God than that of a very powerful human being, and when they even depicted the Deity in human form. . . . We, however, will hold fast by that alone which Jesus Christ taught and revealed. And he, the Eternal Son, described the Father as the purest Love in whom there is no particle of evil—as the all-perfect Being in whom, consequently, no human passion or weakness can dwell, who is alike incapable of jealousy, of anger, of vengeance, and of repentance. He blames the outbreak of such passions in men; how, then, could he find them praiseworthy in the Highest Being, in Him who is emphatically love and goodness.”

There are many passages of much feeling and eloquence combined—

“Wherefore weepest thou, sorrowing widow, by the coffin of thy husband? And thou, faithful child, on the grave of thy father, thy friend? And thou disconsolate mother by the bier of thy infant? What is it that they bear to the grave? Is it not merely the mortal coil? or can spirits die and moulder to the ground? Why fixest thou thine eyes, sore with weeping, on the earth? Ah! that which has fled from thee, that which thy eye seeketh, is not there! Lift thine eyes to heaven; let them penetrate the boundless universe! Thy friend is there. The mysterious power which animated the dust, and which we call soul,—the same that so often smiled lovingly on thee through tender eyes—that spoke to thee from friendly lips, now with solemn earnestness, now with joyful mirth,—it has gone to God, is with God—has entered into more glorious connexions, into higher spheres of action—is more elevated, freer, happier, more perfect than thou!” &c. &c.

There are perhaps more striking and important passages in the book, but we had read it without any intention of making extracts, and therefore took the first that came to hand. The style of the translation is perspicuous and free from Germanisms. There are occasionally apostrophes, personifications, and ecstatic expressions that mark the continental origin, but nothing extravagant. The translator speaks of the original as “generally ascribed to Zschokke.” We are surprised at such a qualified expression; for if the autobiography of Zschokke be genuine, and we have never heard a doubt on the subject, there can be no question of the authorship. For in the

“Conclusion” of that work he says, “A circumstance not worthy naming made it a sort of necessity that the author of the ‘Hours of Devotion’ [in German, *Stunden der Andacht*, and from which these selections are taken] should reveal a name concealed for thirty years. It became first publicly known in Magdeburg, and thence in other places.” He had, in an earlier passage, stated that “in the beginning of the year 1808, appeared every week a sheet entitled ‘Hours of Devotion for the Advancement of True Christianity and Domestic Piety,’ and that these were continued uninterruptedly for eight years.

CHRISTIAN LIBERTY; ITS EXTENT AND LIMITATION: *a Sermon preached on October 5th, 1862, in the Church of the First Presbyterian Congregation, Belfast, on the occasion of its being re-opened after the erection of the Memorial Window. By the REV. WILLIAM BRUCE, Senior Minister of the Congregation.* Pp. 24. Belfast: Henry Greer, High Street.

THE preacher and the occasion combine to give to this sermon more than ordinary interest. Mr. Bruce has completed his fiftieth year as pastor of the Congregation, and throughout the whole period of his ministry has been distinguished by his wisdom, scholarship, moderation, consistency, and a diligent attention to his pastoral duties. The high position which he has long held, and the respect and confidence which his brethren in the ministry repose in him, render the opinions to which he may give expression worthy of the utmost attention. The occasion of the re-opening of the church, after the erection of the beautiful window by the Congregation as a memorial of the faithful services of their revered pastor, afforded a becoming opportunity of setting forth those principles of Christian Liberty which both he and his forefathers, for successive generations, have faithfully maintained.

Mr. Bruce takes his text from 1 Cor. viii. 9—“But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling-block to them that are weak.” After explaining the particular reference of the text to the Gentile portion of the converts in the apostolic times, he goes on to consider the nature of Religious Liberty, which, he justly says, “should allow every man to adopt his own

course in the worship of God and the discharge of his religious duties." He refers to "the right of private judgment," showing that all judgment must be private and personal judgment, but that the expression of private judgment and the utterance of the thoughts have often been subjected to arbitrary force—"to penal enactments and ecclesiastical tyranny."

After dwelling on the grievances which the Act of Uniformity entailed, and showing the injustice and folly of forcing the opinions of thinking men into a precise conformity with the decrees of councils and assemblies, he considers the opposite extreme, and notices the latitudinarian views which have been recently advocated. The following passages will be read with interest:—

"And having remarked so far upon this extreme of forcing the opinions of thinking men into a precise conformity with the requirements of an Act of Parliament, or the decrees of councils or assemblies, I feel that the interests of truth, and my duty as a minister, require me to place before you that other extreme that is becoming too prevalent, of a vagueness and excessive latitude of sentiment in which you can find no distinguishing trait of the Christian faith.

"In neither case would I presume to sit in judgment on the persons, nor would I refuse to admit that they may have satisfied their own consciences: although I cannot see the propriety of their conduct, or their faithfulness to their trusts: and I am the more particular in making this assertion, because it has, I hear, been alleged, without a particle of truth, that from some of our pulpits, our brethren who differ from us have been charged with infidelity. As far as I know or can ascertain, no such assumption of passing judgment on others' thoughts has ever taken place. To their own masters let them stand or fall: we meddle not with individual characters, we simply proceed upon avowed principles.

"I attribute, then, no principles or opinions that are not avowed: but when I see a strong disposition to bestow studious, undistinguishing, unreserved praise on authors whose marked distinction is a disavowal of the truth of the Christian Religion, a denial of the authority (I may say the veracity) and divine mission of Christ, a contemptuous treatment of those miraculous powers which he claimed, and to the reality of which he confidently appealed in attestation of his mission; and when I see, combined with this, an encouragement held out to those who are to be appointed to minister to our worshipping societies, to refuse giving any testimony to these truths, or any disavowal of these too prevalent opinions; I see every reason for our religious societies being suspicious of a course that allows (to say the least) the *possibility* of admitting into the Christian ministry any that are reluctant to avow their allegiance to Christ, and their obligations to teach what

the Evangelists and Apostles have testified to be the truth—the fundamental truth of the whole Christian scheme.

“I say too, that, under pretence of a liberty to which they are not entitled, they are by this act showing unfaithfulness to that Master whom they are bound to serve. They are in reality advocating the slavery of concealment (and every one knows how great a slavery it is to conceal a sentiment that is earnestly felt), instead of that plainness of speech that was the characteristic of Paul and those who had the same hope with him. I say they have no right to the liberty to which they pretend; because, when they undertake the ministry of the Gospel, they become the *servants* of Christ, and they are thenceforward to be devoted to what that service requires. If they had this liberty that they thus pretend to, then, indeed, would this liberty become not only a stumbling-block to those that are weak, but an offence unto Christ, ‘a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence,’ instead of being that ‘corner stone, elect and precious,’ so that those that believe shall not be confounded or led astray.”

Mr. Bruce very happily draws a distinction between the members of a Christian church, and those who undertake the office of Christian teachers. He argues that the means of instruction and grace should be allowed to all, and even if some be “weak in the faith” we should not allow any doubtful disputations to prevent us from receiving them. He then goes on to say—

“But this is totally different from what may and ought to be required from a person undertaking the ministerial office in a congregation, involving as it does many considerations and duties peculiar to itself. In the one case, the exemplification of the Christian spirit and the Christian precepts by a Christian course of life may be sufficient; but in the other he is bound to hold fast the faithful word in his teaching, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. If we consider this as a trust—which it is, and an important one too,—it is right and proper that he should make a public declaration, before those among whom he is to exercise his office, as to what he conceives the principles and duties of that trust to be. If we consider it as a contract, which it is, then honesty and plain dealing require that the conditions of the contract should be clearly known and fully acknowledged. If he seeks to be admitted as a member of a Presbytery, they have a right to know on what principle he seeks to be so admitted, and whether there will be any common bond of union or co-operation between them. This is no dictation of opinion, no usurpation of authority; it is only looking for candour instead of abetting ambiguous dealing.”

Mr. Bruce concludes this most valuable discourse by urging the importance of the principles which he had set forth, and recommending those whom he addressed to

cherish a profound reverence for the teachings of Sacred Scripture, as being most powerfully calculated to regenerate the heart and direct the life. Not only by the members of Mr. Bruce's congregation, but by many others to whom personally or by character he is known, this discourse, reasonable, calm, and earnest as it is, will be read with interest, and must accomplish much good.

A CUNNING EPISTLE.

OUR readers will not have forgotten a brief article in our September number, entitled "*An Unspoken Speech*," in which we showed, by evidence both direct and indirect, that a speech given in the columns of the *London Inquirer*, as if spoken by the Rev. S. C. Nelson, on the occasion of moving that the Northern Presbytery of Antrim be admitted into the Association of Non-Subscribing Presbyterians, was never uttered by that gentleman. The speech, as reported in the *Inquirer*, contained most unjust and offensive reflections on the Rev. W. Bruce and the other members of the Northern Presbytery; while, so far from uttering an offensive word on the occasion, Mr. Nelson even excelled himself in blandness and suavity, and in most complimentary terms welcomed them as members of the Association. Since the publication of our short article on the subject, one gentleman who was present at the meeting has signified his readiness to swear that Mr. Nelson said every word that the *Inquirer* represents him to have spoken; but happily the matter is put beyond doubt by the following letter from the pen of Mr. Nelson, in which he virtually, but with great modesty, admits the inaccuracy of the *Inquirer's* report, and the correctness of our criticism. We may, therefore, put the "swearing gentleman" aside, and introduce our readers to as cunning an epistle as we have ever read.

"TO THE EDITOR OF THE INQUIRER.

"SIR,—Since the publication of our Irish periodical, the *Non-Subscriber*, I have not been a constant subscriber to your paper. Often getting it, however, secondhand, I have generally contented myself with a reading of the principal articles, merely glancing at reports of meetings and other matters of minor importance. For the future, I shall be obliged by your having it sent to me regularly. This I wish, not only because the *Inquirer* has become more interesting, and in every way improved under your management; but on account of the just and liberal manner in which you have noticed the unhappy differences that have been so miserably fomented amongst the Irish Unitarians.

"In your number of 26th July, you gave a report of the annual meeting of our Non-Subscribing Association. This I did not read at the time, taking for granted that you had copied, as you frequently do, from that journal so proverbial, for nearly forty years,

for its excellent reports, the *Northern Whig*. A friend, however, having now called my attention to your report of our proceedings at Comber, I find that some observations which I made on that occasion are not just correctly given. I do not want to inquire how or whence you got the account. This is a matter of little moment. But it represents me as not acting quite consistently with the course I have uniformly endeavoured to pursue throughout this wretched controversy. The *Whig's* report, though brief, was pretty correct; and my observations, I perceive, are given still more correctly in the August number of the *Non-Subscriber*, whose talented and accurate editor happened to be present at our meeting. You represent me as lecturing rather severely, on account of their retrograde movements, the *dissentient* ministers, as they properly style themselves, of the four congregations who have seceded from our ancient Presbytery of Antrim, and who have formed themselves into a new body, which they call "The Northern Presbytery of Antrim." Now, my only object was, as you will see by the enclosed report, cut out of the *Non-Subscriber*, to promote peace and harmony, if possible, and to welcome them in seeking admission into our association. The very fact of their application I regarded as *prima facie* evidence of their disposition to act, in concert with their present respected moderator, as non-subscribers, although one or two of them had been, for two years past, vainly attempting to introduce a 'code of discipline' and confessions of faith into our free Presbytery, and to render it an *authoritative* court, instead of a *consultative* assembly, as it was constituted by our honoured ancestors in 1726. But, at our meeting in Comber, I carefully avoided, and wished to bury in oblivion, all irritating topics; and I expressed, what I have never ceased to feel and to cherish, my personal esteem and affection for my own and my father's hereditary friends, the sons of the noble and independent William Porter, and of the revered Dr. Bruce..... I am, &c.,

"S. C. NELSON,

Moderator of the Presbytery of Antrim.

"Downpatrick, Sept. 10, 1862.

"[Our report was derived from local authority, and, we believe, was not materially different from that which appeared in the *Northern Whig*, although, from the exigencies of space, some of the qualifying portions of Mr. Nelson's speech were inadvertently omitted.—Ed. of *Inq.*]"

Our readers will observe how ingeniously Mr. Nelson endeavours to meet the exposure which we made of him as he is reported in the *Inquirer*. By sly and stealthy steps he vainly tries to escape from the awkward position in which he has been placed by his own folly, or that of some injudicious accomplice. He approaches the *Inquirer* in the most complimentary terms, and after assigning a ridiculously frivolous reason for not having been latterly a regular subscriber, most generously orders the paper. If there were not a purpose to serve, that order should have been given to the publisher or agent, and not to the editor. He then speaks of the great improvement which had taken place in the *Inquirer* under the management of the

present editor, forgetting, we suppose, that it has been under the same management, good or bad, *for five or six years!* The powerful and brilliant articles which have distinguished the *Inquirer*, and even its "just and liberal conduct" in the late differences among the Irish Unitarians, failed to attract Mr. Nelson, and draw forth his grateful support, till he found it necessary to explain and correct the false report of a speech which had mysteriously found its way into its columns. A friend, it seems, had called his attention to this report,—perhaps that friend was ourselves,—and on reading it, he found that some observations which he had made are "not just correctly given." "Not just correctly given!" If he remembers anything of what he said at the meeting, he must know that they are most glaringly and offensively incorrect, and it is utterly vain in him to hope thus to gloss over so reckless an imposition. He further adds, "I do not want to inquire how or whence you got the account. This is a matter of little moment." We beg your pardon, Mr. Nelson: it is a matter of the utmost moment. Grave suspicion attaches to yourself, and some have supposed that the speech which appeared in the *Inquirer* is the one which you intended to make at the meeting in Comber; and, from diffidence or prudence, having failed to speak it then, it was published in England for the gratification of your sympathizers there; and be assured that the studied caution with which you refer to the authorship will not tend to remove, but rather to strengthen, that suspicion.

Mr. Nelson speaks of the course he has uniformly endeavoured to pursue in this controversy, intimating that he has tried "to promote peace" and "avoid all irritating topics." In one respect he is right. In the public discussions that have arisen, he has seldom taken a bold and manly part: but in another respect he is greatly wrong; for he has certainly endeavoured more than any other minister, by indirect attacks, to promote the cause of his party. Just after the controversy, which has now existed for several years, had commenced, he attempted in the most unseemly manner to drag the subject into the Annual Meeting of our Sunday-School Association, into which, neither before nor since, have such topics ever been introduced; and he was proceeding to censure certain brethren, when the Secretary interposed and protested against the apple of discord being thrown into their peaceful proceedings. In the introductory remarks which he made when appointed President of the Non-Subscribing Association, and also in his discourse before retiring from the chair, he introduced the same irritating theme, knowing well that it would be contrary to all rule for any member to reply to the President's address or sermon. And now, though he was gentle as a lamb at the late meeting of our Association, with a cunning which is certainly not lamb-like, this "unspoken speech" appears in the *Inquirer*, and—to employ a figure suggested by his own meek vocabulary—an attempt is made to give "a stiletto thrust" to his opponents. The readers of the *Inquirer* are led to suppose that the Northern Presbytery was admitted into the Association under protest and by special favour.

The date of this remarkable letter, September 10, as compared with the time of its publication, September 27, is ominous. Two

numbers of the *Inquirer* were issued and it did not appear. Was it that the editor hesitated to be a party to it, or was it ante-dated, and did it appear in due course?

It is worthy of remark that Mr. Nelson, writing in his own case and for his own purposes, signs himself "Moderator of the Presbytery of Antrim." We do not believe that he had any authority from the Presbytery to write this letter. It concerns himself alone, and, while we admit that the other members agree with him in his views of Christian liberty, we are greatly mistaken in their character, if they would lend themselves to the trickery of this cunning epistle. We conceive that Mr. Nelson was no more justified in appending the title of "Moderator of the Presbytery of Antrim" to his name in this case than Dr. Cooke would have been in writing himself "Moderator of the General Assembly," when he accepted an invitation to the late Orange meeting in the Belfast Botanic Gardens.

The paragraph from the pen of the Editor of the *Inquirer*, at the foot of Mr. Nelson's letter, deserves to be noticed. Englishmen are proverbially fond of fair dealing; but we suppose an exception only proves the rule, and an exception here we certainly have. He shows himself a willing tool to serve a party. He says that the report which appeared in his paper was not materially different from that which appeared in the *Northern Whig*. We have the two reports before us, and can state that the opposite is the fact. It was most materially and essentially different, containing those unjust attacks on the Northern Presbytery which Mr. Nelson never spoke, and which, therefore, the *Whig* never reported; and, so far from omitting any of the qualifying parts of Mr. Nelson's speech, it omits nothing, but adds much, and most unfairly. He informs us that the report was furnished to him by "a local authority." He thus eludes our question—Who reported this unspoken speech? but he draws our attention to Downpatrick as the source from which it emanated. It is surely unworthy of a respectable Editor thus unscrupulously to throw his shield over attempts at imposition. The question which agitates the Non-Subscribing bodies in Ulster is an important one—Shall the ministry of our Churches, and the religious instruction of our children and our children's children, be entrusted to those only who acknowledge the Divine Mission of our Blessed Redeemer; or shall it be open to those, too, who regard him in knowledge and power as no more than a Socrates or a Shakspeare? That question should be argued fairly, openly, earnestly; but whatever side a man takes, he should not stoop in support of his views to a trick so unworthy as that which it has now been our duty to expose.

BALLYCLARE CONGREGATION.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CHRISTIAN UNITARIAN.

SIR,—I will feel obliged by your allowing me to correct various misstatements contained in a letter on the Ballyclare case, lately published by Mr. William Logan. I know that when party feel-

ing runs so high, the same statements and doings will appear in different lights to the opposing sides, and it is difficult even for those in the neighbourhood, and much more for persons at a distance, to form a just opinion of the many occurrences that have arisen to distract our once united congregation, and to imperil its very existence. I hope a minute account may yet be given of the whole case, and circulated in a pamphlet form for the information of those most deeply interested. I will trespass on your pages little further than is necessary simply to correct the glaring inaccuracies in Mr. Logan's letter.

Mr. L. accuses the Committee of having "attempted to apply the property to other than congregational purposes; some of them affirming that it was their own, and they would do as they chose with it." The Committee desired to grant the Session House, for a short time, for the accommodation of an Intermediate School, which, to the credit of the neighbourhood, was being established, and they believed that such a use of the building would be in no way improper. None fancied that the building was their own, or claimed the right of doing what they pleased with it. Mr. Hall opposed the Committee, because, as some supposed, several National schoolmasters, who were his intimate friends, might be injured by the establishment of a superior school. Mr. Logan himself was one of these teachers. It is not true, as Mr. L. states, that the seatholders unanimously opposed the Committee, unless by "seatholders" he means the *clique* to which he belongs.

The School Committee, as soon as they understood there was any objection, withdrew their application; but dissatisfaction arose, and consequently in October '58 a deputation, consisting of the late Mr. Wm. Archer, Mr. Kirkpatrick, and Mr. Alexander, waited on the Presbytery to obtain counsel and instructions for their future guidance. A number of queries were put to the Presbytery, and upon the answers received the present printed Rules of the Congregation are based.

It is untrue that "an unrelenting and unnecessary persecution has been carried on against Mr. Hall by a few of the disappointed Committee;" but it is true, that within the last three years the congregation gave Mr. Hall more than one valuable present, and that all the Committee subscribed; nay, that the very parties held up by Mr. Logan as having refused to assist, were the collectors of the subscriptions. And further, the same gentlemen were the foremost in acting on the advice of the Rev. John Porter to increase the congregational stipend, which was done to the amount of about 35 *per cent.*; of this increase Mr. Hall's present friends did not contribute *one tenth part*.

So much for Mr. Logan's statements about persecutions. It is too true that in the beginning of last year very great discontent prevailed on account of the tenor of Mr. Hall's sermons. Many of the old and steady members of the congregation felt grieved at the apathy with which Mr. Hall treated the Christian ordinances. They shivered under the cold breath of scepticism which pervaded the whole services, and which turned devotional exercises into a spiritless, unmeaning routine. Mr.

Hall's best friends saw the danger of the course he was pursuing, and, to check the growth of discontent, eight of them, among whom were Mr. Logan's own father, and also his uncle, Mr. Adamson, agreed to send a private letter to Mr. Hall, earnestly entreating him to show more respect to the Lord's Supper, to dispense with the services of his brother on sacramental occasions, and to visit his flock more frequently. To this letter, couched in the kindest terms, no answer was given; but in one of his extraordinary sermons preached after receiving it, he referred to the complaint that had been made, and exhibited that dogged spirit and that want of good sense which have done so much to destroy his ministerial usefulness.

Mr. L. says, "At this time the congregation, strongly disapproving of the Committee's conduct, passed a resolution censuring it, and expressing their entire satisfaction with, and unaltered attachment to, their minister."

This is a distortion of fact. The simple truth is—at a meeting of a Literary Society composed, in a great measure, of Mr. Hall's friends, it was carried that the Rev. J. Porter should be invited to give a lecture in the meeting-house. He did so, and on the occasion the party took the opportunity to force on a resolution something like the one alluded to. But what was the consequence? The principal members of the Society resigned; and this step was a death-blow to the body, as it was afterwards only able to drag its existence through two attempts at meeting.

Finding all friendly remonstrance vain, a deputation waited on the Presbytery, in October, 1861, to complain of certain things unsatisfactory in Mr. Hall's ministry: among these were his abstaining from the use of wine at the communion, though usually lifting the cup to his head, as if making a show of partaking; his taking Shakspeare's Plays into the pulpit on the Lord's Day, and reading a long extract from one of them; his unbecoming references to miracles; his statement that, in choosing a singing clerk, he did not care whether he was a Jew, Turk, or Heathen, if he could sing; his calling his Committee "a parcel of dolts," and using in the pulpit other equally offensive language towards those who differed from him.

Mr. L. states that "a clandestine communication was entered into by certain members of the Presbytery, to ensure the return of a representative by the Committee to aid them in their attempt to violate the fundamental principles and usages of the body." Every word of this is utterly untrue. The Session and Committee returned the Elder, as was still their custom; and in doing so, they were guided solely by his age, respectability, and fitness. He would go only as a free man, untrammelled as to how he should vote until he would hear the question discussed. The Session and Committee were perfectly satisfied with this condition; but Mr. Hall and his friends wished one sent who would bend as desired, and knowing the firmness of Mr. Dundee, and the flexibility of Mr. Adamson, they resolved to secure the latter by any means.

Mr. L. says "a congregational meeting was called, to which the public were invited, by printed placards, to hear infidelity exposed," &c. This is mere clap-trap. Not one such placard was either

printed or posted. A meeting of the congregation was called, that the Secretary might read to them the Minutes of Session for the past year, and explain the state of affairs. But, before the hour of assembling, Mr. Hall and his friends had taken possession of the house, and it was found impossible to proceed with the business. The scene was a perfect bear-garden, and, among the loudest of the crowd was Mr. Hall, calling out to one of his party "*Keep it up! Keep it up! Go on! Go on!*" It was thought advisable to withdraw from such an exhibition in a house of worship, and to retire to the Court-house to finish the business for which the meeting had been called.

Mr. L. incorrectly states that persons were "excommunicated," as he terms it, by the Committee, and that members reduced their stipend for the purpose of cutting off the supplies and preventing Mr. Hall from getting the Regium Donum. True, the Committee did, in obedience to the instructions of the Presbytery, decline to allow subordinate members of families to become seatholders. That decision, however, would tell against both parties. No seatholder reduced his stipend for the purpose stated, but several intimated that they would pay less, if Mr. Hall's adherents, whose leader paid only $7\frac{1}{2}d$ *per quarter*, should continue to annoy and override the congregation.

The statements that voters were made for the occasion; that a mock vote was taken; that many of those who voted had never paid stipend; and that undue influence and coercive means were used to secure votes, are entirely without foundation.

I would like to examine the Replication signed by the Revs. S. C. Nelson and Hugh Moore; but I must not trespass further on your space. Permit me, however, to say, that Mr. Nelson affirms in the Replication, that the Presbytery acted "justly, legally, and constitutionally," in receiving Mr. Adamson as Elder, while, in a letter which the Secretary of the Congregation received from him in February, he states that "both appointments (that of Mr. Dundee and that of Mr. Adamson) were, doubtless, irregular." How will Mr. Nelson reconcile these statements?

I regret that it was considered prudent to refuse admission to the commissioners who came to Ballyclare in February: but, though the Committee, having left the Presbytery, could not recognize their authority, the Secretary offered to lay the entire books before the commissioners, provided they would accompany him to his own house or to that of Mr. Gregg, a member of the Committee. A letter was received by the Secretary from Mr. Nelson on the previous Monday announcing the intended visit of these commissioners, and requesting him to give notice of it to the congregation on Sunday, that is, *on the day before the letter was received*. It purported to have been written on Saturday, and, if posted on that day, would have been in time for notice on Sunday; but it bore the Downpatrick post-mark of *Sunday*, from which I infer two things, first that it was posted on Sunday, and, secondly, that Mr. Nelson does not care a fig for *dates*.—I am Sir, &c.,

A MEMBER OF COMMITTEE OF BALLYCLARE
NON-SUBSCRIBING CONGREGATION.

INTELLIGENCE.

CONGREGATIONAL ENTERTAINMENT AT GLENARM.

ON Monday evening, the 29th Sept., a soiree was given by the Remonstrant Congregation of Glenarm, to welcome the presence amongst them of the Rev. Dr. Montgomery, of Dunmurry, and also to celebrate the centenary of the erection of their house of worship. The soiree was held in the Meeting-house, which was tastefully decorated for the occasion with flowers and evergreens. Numerous and appropriate mottoes covered the walls, and over the pulpit was suspended a scroll bearing the words—"Welcome to the Rev. Dr. Montgomery, the Champion of Civil and Religious Liberty."

A large and respectable assemblage of more than three hundred persons sat down to tea, comprising members of various churches and denominations not only of Glenarm, but also from Ballymena, Cairnlough, Cairncastle, Larne, Ballycastle, Carrickfergus, &c.

The proceedings were opened by prayer by the Rev. James Calwell, minister of the congregation; and, the assembly having abundantly partaken of the good things provided, the chair was taken by Mr. Calwell, who briefly explained the nature and objects of the meeting, and, in a few appropriate words, introduced the first speaker, the Rev. Classon Porter, of Larne.

Mr. PORTER, after some introductory observations, proceeded to read, from ancient Presbyterian records and other documents in his possession, a lengthened and minute history of the Glenarm Congregation from the year 1622 down to the present time, which was listened to throughout with great attention by the meeting.

The CHAIRMAN next proposed "Civil and Religious Liberty," the great charter sentiment of their Church, and called upon the fearless and consistent advocate of its principles, the Rev. Dr. Montgomery, their honoured guest of the evening, to respond.

Dr. MONTGOMERY, who was received with great applause, replied in one of the most earnest and powerful addresses to which we have ever listened, breathing all the freshness of his early advocacy of the great cause, and strengthened by the experience of his long and varied life, and his illustrious and successful labours to promote the spread of its genuine principles, and to cause its blessings to be widely felt among his brethren of mankind. The speech, which occupied more than an hour in delivery, was listened to with delight by the audience, and the eloquent and venerable gentleman resumed his seat amidst the warmest demonstrations of applause. We regret that it is not in our power to supply an outline of this valuable address, which was deeply appreciated by all who enjoyed the advantage of hearing it, and no doubt will be productive of much good among the several denominations in the locality.

The sentiment of "the Benevolent Tendencies of the Age," being next given from the chair, was responded to by the Rev. Moore Getty, of Ballycarry, who, in a clear and forcible speech, demonstrated that, notwithstanding many discouraging symptoms

to the contrary, there are still sufficient indications in human intercourse at the present day to assure us of the growth and progress of general benevolence and practical Christianity in society; and that, instead of being disheartened even by such terrible evils as the present war in America, we had still abundant reason to thank God and take courage.

"The Memory of the Ejected Non-Conformists of Ireland and England, in 1661-62," was spoken to by the Rev. John A. Crozier, of Ballymena, in a brief address.

MR. CROZIER having answered several objections which had been made in various quarters against celebrating the memories of the illustrious Non-Conformists of 200 years ago, confined his observations chiefly to the sixty-one ejected Presbyterian ministers of the North of Ireland, and more especially to those of Glenarm, and the adjoining parishes in County Antrim. He described the persecutions, sufferings, and hardships they were compelled to undergo, through fidelity to God and duty; and claimed them as the political and religious ancestors of the Presbyterian Churches in Ireland, who won for them with their toil and blood the noble inheritance, the full measure of civil and religious liberty which they now so happily and peacefully enjoy.

The CHAIRMAN next gave "Our brethren of other denominations who have favoured us with their company this evening," which called forth an excellent and truly liberal reply from Mr. Dick, of Glenarm.

The Rev. C. PORTER, in a pleasant and appropriate manner, proposed "The Ladies," connecting with the sentiment the names of the stewards, and of their worthy chairman and respected minister, the Rev. James Calwell.

The Rev. Dr. MONTGOMERY replied on behalf of the ladies, and took occasion, before concluding, to congratulate the minister and congregation on their mutual good feeling and evident and increasing prosperity.

Mr. CALWELL briefly replied on behalf of himself, the stewards, and the congregation, returning the sincere thanks of all to the ministers and other friends who had done them the kindness of coming to their meeting.

The Dismission Hymn was then sung by the choir, by whom many beautiful hymns, together with the National Anthem, had been effectively sung during the evening, and the meeting separated at a late hour, the parting benediction having been given by the Rev. Dr. Montgomery.

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE PRESBYTERY OF ANTRIM.

On Wednesday, October 8th, a special meeting of this reverend Body was held in Belfast—the Rev. S. C. Nelson in the chair—for the purpose of receiving a memorial from the Congregation of Ravara. The memorial stated that the Congregation was strongly attached to the principles of religious liberty, which allow every man to worship God according to his conscience, free from the interference, control, and authority of any ecclesiastical body—that they had been associated with the Presbytery of Bangor in the Remon-

strant Synod of Ulster, but had always opposed the imposition of doctrinal tests by that body—that, on the occasion of the last installation, in 1859, they had resented the attempt made to catechise their pastor, and, by the generous assistance of the liberal members of the Bangor Presbytery, vindicated their right to independent election in defiance of clerical authority—that they anticipate an early vacancy, and are unwilling to bring on any of their co-presbyters the penalties which they would incur by resisting the regulations of the Synod, and they have, therefore, unanimously resolved to withdraw from the Remonstrant Synod—that they have taken a lively interest in the Presbytery of Antrim, and have viewed, with entire satisfaction, the recent stand made against tests, creeds, and human confessions of faith, and they beg to be admitted into connexion with that reverend body. This memorial was signed by the minister, the Rev. Franklin Bradley, and by John Barry, David Cleland, and Samuel Orr, as Commissioners.

The Rev. D. WATSON moved that the Congregation of Ravara, with its minister, be received into the Presbytery.

The REV. JOHN PORTER seconded the motion. He said he could not look back on the past with reference to that congregation without mingled feelings of joy and sorrow. We had not then a religious police to watch us, and inspect our outgoings and incomings, and take note of everything that was uttered. There were then no spiritual detectives walking up and down, and scanning everything that was done. Then we were a truly united and Christian Church. But, while we have since had our troubles, we are not left friendless. The laity of our body sustained us in our late trial under the most arduous circumstances. We have, during the last twelve months, had a sore fight to wage, and some of us must acknowledge that we have had blows to bear, but we were encouraged in the troubles that we passed through by having the support of our congregations; and now, by the admission of the Congregation of Ravara, we will be of the same numerical standing as before the disruption took place. Our Presbytery has changed no principle since the year 1726, when it was formed. The fundamental principles of the Presbytery, as held then by the distinguished fathers of the body, continue the same, unchanged to this present hour.

The motion for the reception of the Congregation of Ravara was put and passed unanimously.

[It should be observed, that the doctrinal test, to which the Ravara Congregation object, is only an acknowledgement of the Divine authority of Revelation, and, if they do not desire to bind their minister to such a principle, they are quite right in making the change recorded above; and if there are other congregations similarly impatient under such a restraint, they should, in all consistency, follow their example. It is all folly to say that the Presbytery has changed no principle since 1726. Then, in one of its fundamental propositions, it held the principle of ordaining, without requiring subscription to the Westminster Confession, any person “who gave sufficient proof of his soundness in the faith, and of having all the other ministerial qualifications and abilities re-

quired in the Gospel." Now, the Presbytery would ordain any person whom one of its congregations might choose, without inquiring at all respecting his Christian doctrine, or other ministerial qualifications. Is there no change of principle there?—
[Ed. CH. UN.]

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN MEETING-HOUSE, BELFAST.

This elegant and commodious Church, after being closed for a few weeks in consequence of the erection of three memorial windows, testifying the respect, gratitude, and attachment of the congregation for their senior minister, the Rev. William Bruce, was re-opened for public worship, on Sunday, the 5th of October, 1862. There was a large and attentive audience, consisting almost entirely of the members of the congregation. Mr. Bruce, who conducted the service, delivered an admirable discourse, very seasonable in its application to the present time, which, in compliance with the wish of many of those who heard it, has been printed, and will doubtless be, by the time this notice appears, in the hands of the public.

Beneath the great central window a marble slab is inserted in the wall, bearing the following inscription:—

THESE WINDOWS WERE ERECTED
BY THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CONGREGATION,
IN TESTIMONY OF THEIR LOVE AND VENERATION
FOR THEIR SENIOR PASTOR,
THE REVEREND WILLIAM BRUCE, A.B.,
AND OF THEIR GRATITUDE FOR LONG AND FAITHFUL SERVICES,
ON THE COMPLETION OF THE FIFTIETH YEAR
OF HIS MINISTRY AMONG THEM.
3RD MARCH, 1862.

The windows, which have excited very general admiration, were designed by the eminent artist, F. Howard, Esq., and have been executed by Mr. Forrest, of Liverpool, already well known by several beautiful works in stained glass, which he has erected in various places. The present specimens of his taste and skill will add to his well-deserved reputation.

The Central Window, which is of considerable size, is occupied by a representation of Christ Preaching the Sermon on the Mount. The Saviour is seated, surrounded by his disciples and the multitude; a group of lilies grows at his feet, to which he points with one hand, while the other is directed heavenward. The words which he is supposed to be uttering being those recorded in Matthew vi. 28, 29, 30. "*And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?*" In the fore-

ground are several figures of females and children, while, on the mount, behind and around the Saviour, are grouped the disciples, in various attitudes of interested and earnest attention. All the figures are of life size. At the top of the picture is a palm-tree, indicating the region of Palestine. The whole is surrounded by an ornamental border of the flowers and leaves of lilies.

In the side-window on the right of this central group, is a single figure of St. Peter, the great Apostle of the Circumcision. He is represented as standing, holding a net in his left hand, the moment assumed being that in which our Lord addressed to him and Andrew the command and invitation, "*Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men!*" This window is bordered with a tressure of ivy-leaves.

The window on the other side is occupied by a full-length representation of St. Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles, in the act of shaking the viper from his hands; as narrated in Acts xxviii. 1—6. The border is of oak-leaves.

In the treatment of all these subjects, the artist has judiciously discarded the usual allegorical and conventional attributes, halos, glories, &c., introducing nothing but what is in accordance with the artistic development of the historical idea. The result is one of the most beautiful and satisfactory works of the kind existing in Ireland, or perhaps in the United Kingdom; appropriate to the object for which it has been erected, and harmonizing with the style of the building in which it is placed, and which, as a testimonial of the feelings entertained for Mr. Bruce by his flock, must, in a very high degree, be gratifying to him and his family. In handing down to future ages a record of these feelings, it is to be hoped that it will stimulate successive generations of pastors to emulate the virtues of which it is the graceful and enduring record.

OBITUARY.

Died, on Friday, October 3rd, at New York, Margaret Auld, wife of Samuel Barbour, Esq., of Brooklyn and New York, and daughter of John Riddel, Esq., of Beechmount, Belfast.

On Tuesday morning, October 15th, John Charley Riddel, Esq., second son of John Riddel, Esq., of Beechmount, Belfast, aged 34 years.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Received, *The Monthly Messenger* for October.

The Rev. Dr. Montgomery promises for publication in our next Number "two short portions of *Autobiography*, in refutation of certain oral and printed slanders perseveringly circulated against him by 'Special Liberals,' in relation to the late Rev. F. Blakely and another matter."

Communications for the Editor, to be addressed by post to Rev. C. J. M'Alester, Holywood; or, otherwise, to 45, Arthur Street, Belfast.

THE
CHRISTIAN UNITARIAN.

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DECEMBER, 1862.

[No. 11.]

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY—WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY! what stirring memories does it awaken of sacrifices, sufferings, and triumphs! In its holy cause what privations have been endured, and what noble struggles have been made! The Gospel, which breathes freedom in every sentence, would, we might suppose, in its progress have extinguished intolerance, and introduced, wherever it was professed, not toleration merely, but perfect religious freedom. Yet it has not been so; for, in the hallowed name of Christ's Gospel, oppressions the most cruel have been practised, and the dire spirit of persecution has appeared under the garb of Christianity. By slow and gradual steps, through many a threatening tempest, the tree of religious liberty has grown in these lands into its present stately form, and now under its broad shadow all may recline in peaceful security, each permitted to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience.

Not to go back far beyond the period of the Reformation—prior to that eventful crisis in the history of our country there was no religious liberty, for all were constrained to profess the one faith, and those who, by calm reflection or the patient study of God's Word, were led to entertain views in opposition to the "orthodox" stereotyped doctrines, were compelled to hide their convictions; to have given expression to them would have been to expose themselves to anathemas and excommunication, to the prison or the stake. How many promptings of earnest minds must have been thus crushed, or lulled to rest! But at length, through a combination of causes, some holy, and others wicked enough, the supremacy of the Pope was abandoned, and although religious liberty

was not by that change secured, one tyranny at least was overturned. It is an error, however, to suppose that the Reformation brought with it religious freedom. Men were no more at liberty to express their free thoughts under the Eighth Henry, when he assumed the headship in the Church, than when he and his subjects were under the spiritual rule of Leo the Tenth; and although in subsequent reigns, as in those of Elizabeth and her successors, the circle of doctrine in which the mind might move was somewhat enlarged, the inquirer who transgressed that limit, and gave utterance to opinions different from those which were commonly received, exposed himself to insult, to persecution, and even to death. It is only very recently that religious liberty has obtained its greatest development. It is not very many years since any one who by writing impugned the doctrine of the Trinity, rendered himself liable to persecution by the civil authorities; but now men may hold or reject any doctrine of religion, and feel that in the free and honest utterance of their convictions, they have the protection of the laws. In no country on the earth is the liberty of thought, or rather of the expression of thought, more largely enjoyed than in our own. Under our constitution, as by successive reforms it has been amended and liberalized, all denominations of Christians, numerous as they are, are protected in the free exercise of their worship, while there is protection, too, for those who cherish some other form of faith than Christianity, or who hold no faith at all, and reject all religion as only a dream or a priestly imposition.

Religious liberty, as in these countries it is, in theory at least, understood, gives to all the right of entertaining and expressing whatever views they believe to be true on the great subjects of religious thought; and it only imposes restrictions where the rights of others would be unjustly interfered with. Thus, if a sect should exist in our land, as such has existed in earlier times, who believed that it was a duty which they owed to Christ to murder all who did not hold the right faith, the wise laws of the land would interpose to protect us from their cruelty. These fanatics might indeed complain that their liberty was interfered with, but all who were not

demented like themselves would only laugh at their complaints. Roman Catholics, in some parts of the Continent, seem to attach great importance to processions in honour of the Virgin and of various saints. If, in these lands, such processions were contemplated, say in the Strand in London, or in any other public thoroughfare, it would be quite proper for the authorities to interfere, as such exhibitions, however grateful to the mind of a pious Catholic, are to others extremely inconvenient, and interfere most seriously with their progress through the public streets. There is religious liberty then for all, of every faith, and for the free expression of their faith, save where it interferes with the just rights and the reasonable convenience of their fellow-citizens.

The spirit of religious liberty is sometimes violated by those who participate in its blessings. Thus, Roman Catholics at times insult Protestants, and Protestants are too ready to repay the compliment with interest. If any one, from motives that are to him strong and pure, withdraws from one communion and joins another, those whose faith he renounces are very prone to censure his conduct, and to withdraw from all friendly intercourse with him. Even some Non-Subscribers, who are loudest in professions of attachment to the sacred principle of liberty, sometimes allow their passions so far to overcome it, that they regard with impatience, and visit with their displeasure, all who cannot see as far into the region of "free thought" as they have been permitted to penetrate. No diversity of opinion, and no conscientious difference on a matter either of Christian doctrine or of Church government, should awaken unkind feelings. When they do, the principle of religious liberty is practically violated. If angry discussions arise, and our opponent heaps upon us insult and abuse, our love of religious liberty does not require that we should complacently smile upon our assailant and address him with apologies; but it does require that we should crush every unkind feeling, refrain from all offensive language, and show, by our conduct, that we cheerfully accede to others the same right which we claim for ourselves.

It is a great mistake to suppose that a love of religious liberty implies an indifference to religious truth. There

have been among Roman Catholics some consistent and earnest friends of freedom: foremost, perhaps, of all in his own age was Lord Baltimore, who, in the colony which he established in Maryland, secured to all complete religious freedom. But it did not follow that he should so amend the doctrines of his Church that all sectaries, Puritans and others, might be admitted into its fold. Lord Baltimore provided the utmost freedom for others, but he clung, at the same time, most ardently to the views which he regarded as saving truth. Had he said to those who joined him in his new settlement—"Brethren, the Church to which I belong requires that we should give spiritual allegiance to the Pope, and believe in the doctrine of the real presence in the Lord's Supper, worship the Virgin Mary as the Mother of God, and keep all the Sacraments; I know that your conscience will not allow you to do so; I shall, therefore, give up these views and services, though I believe them to be God's truth, and most comforting to my soul, in order that we may all join in one worship, and form one church"—some might, perhaps, have applauded him for his great liberality; but his name would have been handed down to our time, not as the honoured friend of religious liberty, but as an unscrupulous temporizer, who was regardless of the dictates of conscience, and indifferent to religious truth.

We regard the Church of Rome as most unscriptural in its doctrines; so also do we regard, though in a smaller degree, the Protestant Church as by law established in England and Ireland: its consistent members are bound by its articles, its creeds, and its Prayer-book; but yet, creed-bound as that Church is, it has contained many members conspicuous for their labours in behalf of the great cause of religious liberty for all, even for those who most widely dissent from its articles. We presume that those generally who profess the doctrines of that Church believe them. We have no language of condemnation too strong for those who sign its articles, live upon its bounty, and yet, by their own admission, disbelieve what they sign. Such men may be lauded and toasted as liberal, but the same conduct which wins for them on the part of some that undeserved distinction, would, in the ordinary affairs of life, bring down upon them the merited

contempt of every honest man. Churchmen believe in the standards of their Church, and it is not necessary to abandon them and violate their conscience, in order to promote the principles of religious liberty; they could not lay aside views which they regard as most essential to their present and eternal well-being, nor could they join with Unitarians and other dissenters in efforts to propagate the Gospel: but they may feel that that is no reason why they should not give to others the same rights which they themselves enjoy, and be the consistent advocates of freedom for all. It needs no argument from history to show that many Calvinists have been devoted friends of religious liberty: but in thus contending for the rights of others, they did not the less fondly hold to their own favourite dogmas of election and reprobation, the wickedness of new-born infants and the damnation of the heathen. In order to merit the honour of being consistent, it was not necessary that they should lower their Calvinistic standard, blot out the distinguishing doctrines of their Confession, and adopt a form of faith that would include all, Calvinistic and anti-Calvinistic, Prelatical and Presbyterian, Trinitarian and Unitarian, Christian and Deist and Atheist. A strange Church that would be—an anomaly—an absurdity. Men are not the less the advocates of freedom to others, because they hold fast by their own religious convictions.

Our Non-Subscribing Church has been always found to plead the cause of liberty for all, of every denomination; and in the emancipation of their Roman Catholic brethren from the disabilities under which they laboured, and more recently, in behalf of the Jews, they exerted themselves more zealously, in proportion to their numbers and influence, than any other class. Freedom is their inheritance, and their history is the record of struggle after struggle to reach to the liberty which they now enjoy. To turn their back upon that sacred cause, or in any way to betray its principles, should bring down upon them just condemnation. But Non-Subscribing does not mean *Nondescript*; negative in its form, the term is most distinctly positive in its meaning. It embraces all those who accept the Scriptures as containing a divine revelation, and contend for their sufficiency as a rule of

faith,—all who receive Christ as their only Master, rejecting all human leaders and lawgivers in religious concerns. Non-Subscribers are not, therefore, violating their inherited and precious principles of religious freedom when they close their Church against those who refuse to acknowledge the authority of Scripture, and to receive Christ as their only Master to the exclusion of all human leaders. If they treated such persons unjustly, if they endeavoured to injure them in their worldly business, if they refused them the courtesies of life, or inflicted any penalty on them for their peculiar opinions, they would be directly violating the principles of religious liberty: but to modify the constitution of their Church so as to receive them into its seats of instruction, would be to sacrifice their Non-Subscription, or reduce it to *non-belief*.

Some appear to think that religious liberty, properly understood, should break down all barriers between sect and sect, and merge into one chaotic mass all the varieties of doctrine to which the exercise of free thought has given rise; and when Non-Subscribers, true to their Christian principles, demand from those who are to minister to them in holy things a distinct recognition of the divine in Christianity, they are decried as the enemies of religious freedom—tyrants and inquisitors. Such unmeaning and silly declamation will, we trust, produce no effect. To be drawn by the entreaties, or driven by the sneers of the friends of “free inquiry,” from an explicit acknowledgment of faith in the divine authority of Christ and his religion, would be to part from our anchorage, drift into scepticism, and possibly soon be stranded on the barren shore of unbelief. Religious Liberty, then, in its fullest, broadest sense—liberty for every one, whatever his eccentricities or his doubts—we would always advocate, but indifference to religious opinion never.

HE who in any case admits doctrines which contradict reason has broken down the great barrier between truth and falsehood, and lays open his mind to every delusion.
—CHANNING.

EARTH AND HEAVEN.

HOPE nought from earth,—its glories all decay;
Blighted and withered lie its fairest flow'rs;
Its hopes and joys too surely pass away
E'en while we dare to think and call them ours.
Oh! many a lonely heart, and rifled hearth,
With warning voices cry, "Hope nought from earth."

Hope nought from earth,—the sanguine dreams of youth
Lie dead along the path to riper years;
Death and deceit take from us love and truth,
And bitter is the wisdom bought with tears.
Too late we come to feel how little worth
Are all the dearest promises of earth.

Hope all from Heav'n,—all! nay much more than all
That we can image of untroubled peace;
There shall no sorrow be, no tears shall fall;
The mourner's wail for evermore shall cease;
Love shall unite the ties that death hath riven,
And friend meet friend, safe in the courts of Heav'n.

A PLEA FOR THE POOR.

THE wintry blast is cold and keen, and sleet and snow come sharply dashing against the windows. The hills are white with snow, and over all the face of heaven lies a grey and ghastly cloud. But within, we have thick carpets, blazing fires, curtains to keep out draughts, and, knowing that winter was coming, we took care to provide warm clothing to defend us from his frozen breath. Our larders are well filled, our coal-cellar heaped with fuel, our wardrobes hung with bright-coloured and comfortable garments, and, thus provided, the storm and cold without, so far from affecting us unpleasantly, give an added zest to the luxuries which surround us in our homes. Yes, winter has its own pleasures. Christmas is at hand,—Christmas! that festival so dear and honoured in every land which is lighted by the lamp of the Gospel—and then we shall have pleasant and social gatherings of

friends and relations; we shall care little for the wild weather without when we sit beside those we love, at the Christmas feast, or, with laughter and song and dance, cheat the dark night hours of their length. Oh! men and women with hearts and souls! can we not better celebrate this great festival than by giving ourselves up to social enjoyment? Was He in whose honour we commemorate the time, so given to feasting and revelry, that we can find no higher mode of welcoming the day blest by His birth, than by dedicating it to the consumption of rich viands, the exchange of gifts more or less costly, and a merriment which, if it leave no bitterness behind, will as assuredly bless us with no sweet memories of well-spent hours? That great and holy Life teaches us a different lesson, and, as "the poor shall never cease from off the earth," so shall we never be exonerated from the duty of aiding them. It is in vain that we try to stifle our conscience by truisms and platitudes inveighing against indiscriminate almsgiving, and the injurious effects of encouraging the young and strong in idleness and mendicancy. Let all those "wise saws and modern instances" stand intact, unassailable in the fortress of their own selfishness; I leave it to wiser heads and abler pens than mine to combat the position, and am very much of Sir Roger de Coverley's opinion, that "much may be said on both sides." But what of the aged, with palsied hands and failing steps? what of the young helpless children? Ah! many of us have old frail parents of our own tottering on the verge of the grave, many of us have little tender children nestling by our hearths, and for their sakes, if for no higher motive, let us make this Christmas-tide a time of joy and gladness to some who are "ready to perish." Some of us are not rich, but which of us is so poor but that he can give something? Can!—*must*,—it is no question of choice or of expediency, but of plain and straightforward duty. Who has not remarked the faces of the little street Arabs of Belfast? The reckless, boisterous laughter; the squalid attire; the pale, pinched, precocious faces; and, oh! the haunting misery of those eyes!—those old sad eyes, looking out unmoved by the mirth that stirs the lips. I never go into that flourishing, prosperous, commercial town of 120,000 inhabitants, but I bring

away with me a sad heart; sad, that I have neither wealth nor influence, and that I can do nothing to remedy the evils I deplore. During the severe winter weather two years since, a friend, who had been in Belfast one bitter day, told me of a little scene he had witnessed, which would have attracted attention from one less kind-hearted than he, but which I have never since been able to forget. He was standing at the door of a warehouse, when his attention was attracted by a group on the foot-way close at hand. This group consisted of a number of boys, varying in age from about fourteen, down to a little creature who could not have been more than seven. The day, as I have said, was bitterly cold; trodden, sullied snow covered the streets; a heavy fog hung in the air, and a keen black frost was fast hardening the mud and half-melted cart-ruts. The youngest of the boys (a child who, as my friend said, would have been still in the nursery, had he belonged to another station in life), was a puny sickly-looking little fellow, with large, mournful, haggard eyes, blue trembling lips, and bloodless face. His clothing consisted of a man's vest, which descended to his knees, and beneath it was the merest hint of a pair of tattered trousers; a ragged cap was on his head, and his little blue legs were almost quite bare, while his feet stood in the *middle* of a pair of man's shoes, kept on by pieces of cord tied round the ankles, and which he stamped and shuffled about that he might not freeze. Under one arm he carried a pile of newspapers, and the other, frost-bitten and swollen, he held against his mouth, blowing on it from time to time, as if to warm it. The bigger boys,—hardened and premature ruffians,—were indulging in ribald jeers, laughter, and oaths, and the little shivering mite beside them stood looking up admiringly at them, echoing their laughter with a shrill hollow peal, which the misery of his garb and starved face rendered inexpressibly pathetic. Can we not in fancy follow that little waif to his home? Such a home! Some airless, sunless room, in some ill-smelling, densely-populated court. Who will chafe those frozen hands and feet into warmth? Who will supply a comfortable meal to appease his hunger? If he have a mother, she is probably so oppressed with poverty and its many cares, that she is indifferent, and broken in temper

and spirit. If he have not, then blows and curses are his most likely portion. Is there no help for this crushing load of wretchedness? The mighty lever of wealth can lift a heavy burden; shall it be unemployed here? I do not mean to impugn the good intentions of district visitors, who penetrate the back slums and courts for the purpose of leaving tracts, and tracts only, in the homes of the poor. I may have my own opinion as to the efficacy of a tract, where the heads of the house are ground to the earth with misery, and hunger stalks hand in hand with disease; but I fancy that a few kind words, accompanied by a little judicious aid for the body, would do more to benefit the soul, than any tracts that could be given to the poor. I once asked a poor woman if she ever read the tracts left at her house by the well-meaning ladies? "Read!" she said, "I can read none, and the man is just too done when he comes in at nights; it pleases the ladies to leave them, and so we let them stay till they come again for them. Read, indeed! it would fit me better to wash the childhre's duds of cloes, or redd up a bit, than to sit down to read." "The poor ye have always with you"—yes, always. Some of us really see nothing of the poverty around us; others more observant see, and try to banish the recollection of it as soon as possible,—it pains them till they forget it, and so they set to work to do that. Some few, ah! how few, do what they can to relieve such destitution as comes within their sphere. Suppose we all follow their example; let each one take care that at this coming Christmas-tide, one poor household, nay, even one poor person, shall share in his plenty, and have cause for thankfulness and rejoicing. While—

Luxury in palaces lies straining her low thought
To form unreal wants——

thousands are dying of starvation, or of disease engendered by bad and insufficient food, foul air, and cold. Shall it be much longer so? The immortal souls of those perishing creatures are as precious in the sight of God as those of the noblest in the land; but imbruted, sunken, buried as they are in vice, want, and ignorance, the bodies which enclose the undying spark must be cared for before tract or sermon can have power to touch one re-

sponsive chord. Were it not so, the police sheets would be less full of the names of the young, the prison cells would be more frequently vacant, and our great "social evil" would less unblushingly walk abroad at noon-day. We hear many prophecies this year of a prolonged and severe winter. Frost, snow, and cutting winds have come already, and if worse is yet to come, how sorely will it not be felt in the homes of the poor, where in too many cases one or two rooms comprise all the accommodation provided for families frequently numerous. Picture to yourselves the utter absence of comfort—the few sticks smouldering in white ashes on the hearth—the ever-open door (often the sole medium for the transmission of light and air), admitting every blast that blows—the scanty food—the scantier clothing—the beds of straw or chaff—the squalid, threadbare coverings; and *our* pillows are soft, *our* blankets warm and abundant, *our* bodies daintily cared for. Oh, whilst we enjoy, with gratitude to the Giver of all good, the benefits bestowed, let us not forget to aid the sinking and the fallen. However we may blind ourselves to that necessity *now*, a day will surely come, a great and awful day, when no subterfuge will avail, no excuse be valid. Our talents shall be required from us with usury, and woe to those who have buried them in the earth!

PREACHING CHRIST.

PHILIP the Evangelist preached Christ, at an early period of the Gospel history, to the Samaritans. His word must have been with power, for we read that "the people with one accord gave heed to the things which he spake." It may be worth our while to inquire in what way, it is probable, this man, of honest repute and of wisdom,—full also of the Holy Spirit,—preached his Master. We hear much now-a-days of preaching Christ, but is the apostolic model followed therein? Not always, it is to be feared; the words of truth and soberness are not invariably thus spoken.

Now, preaching Christ did not, in these first and best ages of Christianity, mean, as a matter of course, preach-

ing about the person of the Lord Jesus, nor about his substance, his essence, as in the barbarous phraseology of the schools, but preaching his doctrine, his divine mission and authority, his resurrection, and his appointment as the final judge of all mankind. By a well-understood use of language, the teachings of a professedly inspired person were spoken of as the individual himself. Paul speaks of those who preached Christ out of contention and strife, and we are told that Moses was thus preached in the synagogues every Sabbath day. But clear as well as Scriptural as this is, many persons, led away by the mere sound of words, suppose that Christ cannot be preached unless much is said of his person,—of his supposed hypotactical union with the Father,—his deity ; or again, of his priesthood,—of his material blood shed on the cross. We by no means desire to exclude reference to the person of our revered Master, nor do we in the least undervalue the obligations we are under to him personally as our Redeemer from the power of sin ; worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive blessing and honour and glory ; worthy of our dearest love and remembrance ; but Christ must be preached in his mission, his doctrine, his precepts—in his whole life and character, so amiable, so exalted, so perfect—Christ who ever liveth in heaven to make intercession for us—Christ in his Gospel so divine, so every way worthy of the Father of Lights—the word of Christ which should ever dwell within us richly and abundantly, and which is the glorious Gospel of the blessed God. So the early disciples preached him.

Again, Philip preached Christ—not himself. The preaching of Christ is but too frequently made an occasion of display. There is a greed of popularity, and hence, not what the Scriptures teach, but what the multitude applaud is the theme of discourse ; and thus in the pulpit many appear to think more of themselves than of him—more of their oratory, the rounding of their periods, than of the great truths it is their business to deliver. “We preach not ourselves,” writes the Apostle of the Gentiles, “but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for his sake.” And so we must suppose Philip preached—no quips, no far-fetched allusions, no vulgar appeals to the passions unrefined and unsanctified, nor boisterous

asseverations, nor theatrical gesture. Philip had a message to deliver, and his whole thought was on it; he wasted no thought on himself. If the perfection of art be to conceal art, then the best sermon, the most likely to be effectual in reaching the heart through the understanding, must be the simple outpourings of the mind, the preacher forgotten in his subject, Christ all, and therefore likely to be in all. The apostles were single-minded men; their whole souls were in their work; they desired to know nothing save Christ and him crucified. Their sole aim was to be approved of him and to be accepted at the last. They mightily convinced their hearers by the power of truth, and hence Christ was effectually preached by them. The preachers of a pure Gospel faith may, at the present day, see fashion, interest, prejudice, bigotry, arrayed against them, whilst crowds hang on and applaud mere charlatan orators, or those who, swimming with the stream, preach what will please the unreflecting; but for results we are not answerable; we must declare what we believe to be the whole counsel of God; we must uphold the Gospel scheme in its purity and simplicity, however upalatable it may be to the majority, for in that way only can we save the souls of our hearers, and our own.

Nor can we suppose the Evangelist to have preached Christ in the advocacy of priestly claims. Philip was a companion, and may well be called a successor, of the apostles, but he arrogated nothing to himself on that account, as indeed he arrogated nothing to them. Apostolic succession, as now understood, is a mere figment of the brain; it is unworthy of serious refutation, and yet it imposes on numbers, though one should imagine credulity itself would refuse to give it credence. The claim proceeds from the love of power so inherent in human nature. Diotrephes, in the primitive church, loved the pre-eminence, and Diotrephes has never wanted successors in any age or form of the Church. He has attempted to dethrone Christ, and has called in the aid of the magistrate, and claimed to wield the temporal sword. Now Philip did not anathematize and excommunicate. In preaching Christ he enforced charity out of a pure heart, the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace; he cried up no particular order of men, nor did he claim over his

hearers the power to bind and loose. Christ was not divided ; faithful to his trust, the Evangelist magnified the grace of God in the mission of the beloved Son, himself and his companions the servants of all for Jesus' sake.

Once more, Christ was preached in Samaria, clearly, unreservedly, faithfully. The early teachers of Christianity were careful neither to add nor diminish. They spake what they had learned from the Master, in all its integrity. To preach the Gospel now, is to abide by the sacred oracles. We are not to know the theories of schoolmen, philosophers, divines. We are not to travel out of the New Testament records. Gospel truths are very simple, and easy to be comprehended. But then men love mystery. Many are ready to say, Not Jesus but Paul ; not Paul but Plato. They leave the Gospel for the Epistles, and the Epistles for the Fathers, these fathers having been spoiled by a vain, earthly philosophy. Said an old orthodox minister of a younger brother—a most popular preacher in his day—"I believe the cross was in that sermon of his, but it was so covered up with flowers I could not see it." So the cross is frequently hidden now under flowers, under tinselly, meretricious ornament, or pressed down quite out of sight by the wood and hay and stubble of man's piling ; or it is obscured amidst the mists of human philosophy—science falsely so-called. On the other hand, we hear much of intuitions, each man being thus made the supreme judge of his own actions and motives ; and what is said by the Lord Jesus is of value only so far as it may chance to coincide with these so-called dictates of the spirit, the workings of the inner man. The cross thus frequently becomes of no effect ; its preaching is regarded, as in other days, as foolishness. Not thus, however, we may be assured, did Philip preach to his Samaritan hearers, but "Christ the wisdom of God and the power of God."

And it must be remarked, in conclusion, that whilst the Evangelist did not preach exclusively or much about the person of Christ, he yet insisted on a *personal* Christ. The distinction is worth noting. He insisted on an historical Christ—Jesus as the Christ—Jesus who had lived, had died, had been raised to life again, had ascended

to heaven—the same Jesus who, not long previously, and in the memory of great numbers, had gone about doing good, had sat at the well-side with the woman of Sychar, had spoken the words of eternal life, had worked miracles, had been crucified, had risen to die no more. Men have, in these latter days, made to themselves a fantastic, or, as it has been well termed, “a dainty Christ”—something too shadowy to be touched, too ethereal for common use—very pretty to the imagination, but totally unfitted for the ordinary purposes of life—a Christ for the drawing-room, but not for the cottage, not for the house of mourning. Oh, we want a real Christ; we want him who has been seen with the eyes—was looked on—whom the hands had handled; we want Jesus, both Lord and Christ—Jesus who once lived, and taught, and suffered in Judea—Jesus the Lord, with whom the believer hopes to be through eternity. It is that Christ alone who can console and cheer under the pressure of the world’s sorrow, when the soul panteth after God as the hart for the water brooks. Nothing short of this will satisfy the longings of the soul. We want the Christ of the Gospel, so true to our common nature, so compassionate, so, also, the brightness of the Father’s glory. He has shewn us the Father; he is the way to the Father. Philip preached him; the apostles testified of him. We must receive him into our heart of hearts, there to abide for evermore.

T. B.

H E A V E N .

WERE there a country on earth uniting all that is beautiful in nature, all that is great in virtue, genius, and the liberal arts, and numbering among its citizens the most illustrious patriots, poets, philosophers, philanthropists of our age, how eagerly should we cross the ocean to visit it! And how immeasurably greater is the attraction of heaven! There live the elder brethren of the creation, the sons of the morning, who sang for joy at the creation of our race; there the great and good of all ages and climes; the friends, benefactors, deliverers, ornaments of their race; the patriarch, prophet, apostle, and mar-

tyr ; the true heroes of public, and still more of private life ; the father, mother, husband, wife, child, who, unrecorded by man, have walked before God in the beauty of love and self-sacrificing virtue. There are all who have built up in our hearts the power of goodness and truth, the writers from whose pages we have received the inspiration of pure and lofty sentiments, the friends whose countenances have shed light through our dwellings, and peace and strength through our hearts. There they are gathered together, safe from every storm, and triumphant over every evil ; and they say to us, Come and join us in our everlasting blessedness ; come and bear part in our song of praise ; share our adoration, friendship, progress, and works of love.—*Channing*.

CHIDE MILDLY THE ERRING.

CHIDE mildly the erring—

Kind language endears.

Grief follows the sinful—

Add not to their tears :

Avoid with reproaches

Fresh pain to bestow,

The heart that is stricken

Needs never a blow.

Chide mildly the erring ;

Jeer not at their fall ;

If strength were but human,

How weakly we're all !

What marvel that footsteps

Should wander astray,

When tempests so shadow

Life's wearisome way ?

Chide mildly the erring ;

Entreat them with care ;

Their natures are mortal—

They need not despair ;

We all have some frailty,

We all are unwise,

And the grace which redeems us

Must shine from the skies.

PARKERISM IN ULSTER.

AMONG the various modes in which the Bicentenary of 1662 has been commemorated, the most remarkable is the proposal of two Unitarian ministers to publish a people's edition of the works of the late Theodore Parker. In honour of the memory of the worthies who, two hundred years ago, resigned comfortable livings, and submitted to poverty, rather than sacrifice conscience and abandon their allegiance to Christ, some congregations have repaired the meeting-houses which had been erected to cherish and promulgate the principles for which they suffered; others have beautified their churches by the introduction of memorial windows and other ornamentations; and many have liberally contributed to the formation of funds to augment ministers' salaries, to promote ministerial education, to aid the widows of deceased ministers, or to advance dissenting principles, and spread religious truth. Such objects are laudable and consistent, and exhibit a just appreciation of the heroism of our ancestors, and of the value of those principles for which they suffered. How the publication of Parker's writings can form any suitable memorial of a Bicentenary which is associated with the cause of Christ and Christianity, it needs more ingenuity than we possess to discover. We could understand how such a publication might be issued in honour of those who, in opposition to the Christian religion, argued that the Scriptures contained no divine revelation, and that Jesus of Nazareth possessed no divine authority. Tindal and Chubb and David Hume showed much courage in writing against a revelation which was deeply seated in the hearts of the people and ingrafted on the constitution of the country. Let their errors have been what they may, they showed much courage in giving expression to the convictions of their minds, and so far certainly they are entitled to universal respect. A most appropriate tribute to their memory would be the circulation, in a cheap form, of the writings of one conspicuous for his ability, his courage, and his high integrity, who, once a minister in the Christian Unitarian Church, gradually abandoned the belief in a divine revelation by which that Church is distinguished, and promulgated a

religion which is neither more nor less than Deism. Some of the deistical writers of a past century called themselves Christian Deists; by such a title Theodore Parker might be called, for he reverently acknowledged the beauty of Christ's character and the excellence of his precepts, repudiating, at the same time, the idea of his being anything more than a man of high genius and much goodness. He speaks of Jesus as Christ, but, at the same time, speaks of little children in a family as so many "little Christs." He thanks God for him whom, in an age of darkness, he raised up to establish light, but thanks him also for "men of talents no smaller" in our own day. He rejects the authority of Christ, and while Non-Subscribing Christians boast of him as their only Master, this divine declares that he is no Master for him; and he most presumptuously leads us to suppose that he has attained to a knowledge of the perfection of God which is not to be found either in the Old Testament or in the New.

Such are some of the views held and advocated by this distinguished man. The opinions which he believed to be true he openly and fearlessly maintained, and we honour him for his manly bearing. However strongly we condemn his opinions, we have no feelings but those of respect for the man. Now, it is by the wider circulation of these deistical writings two Unitarian ministers seek to commemorate the Bicentenary of 1662. If any one should happen to say, as many have said, and more have thought, that Christian Unitarianism was nothing more than Deism in disguise, the statement would be indignantly contradicted by Unitarian ministers and Unitarian editors, and, for ourselves, we should be amongst the first to do so: but how shall we reconcile this proposed memorial either with the principles which it would commemorate, or with the Christian character of the Church from whose ministers it emanated?

The two ministers by whom this memorial publication of Theodore Parker's works is undertaken, are the Rev. W. Binns of Birkenhead, and the Rev. John Wright of Bury. The former gentleman, of whom it may not be unjust to say that he seems to be thoroughly imbued with Parker's principles, for he not only labours to circulate

his works, but also says that "his interpretation of Christianity bids fair to become the dominant thought in the Unitarian Church," has published a letter in reference to the proposed publication, from which we make the following extract:—

"I have received many communications inquiring when the publication of the cheap edition of Theodore Parker's works will commence. They have convinced me more than ever that sympathy with the free Christian spirit of that great man has a wide existence throughout our denomination. From very unexpected quarters letters have reached me expressing approval of the proposed publication, and offering assistance in the promotion of the sale. Even Ireland is by no means the priest-ridden country that the admirers of a creed-bound ministry, a stationary theology, and an exhausted inspiration at times imagine it to be. Many of the Protestants of Ulster are freemen at heart; and I am informed by the Rev. John Wright, who has recently returned from a visit to that province, that the proposal in my letter of two months ago was welcome tidings to numerous Non-Subscribing Presbyterians."

The reference which is made in this passage to Non-Subscribing Presbyterians in Ulster does not surprise us, and we certainly are not disposed to question the correctness of Mr. Wright's report, although it may be that they are not so numerous as he supposes, for a warm enthusiasm in any cause often leads us unconsciously to exaggerate. Any one who has watched the struggle that has been going on in our Non-Subscribing churches during the past year, must have been struck by the fact that some of the laymen most prominent in advocating what they vaguely term "a free Church," are those who were known to be of the Parker school; while several gentlemen, previously indifferent to the outward observances at least of Christian worship, became suddenly seized with zeal for the Church, and are foremost in Non-Subscribing councils. That many have been led away by the unmeaning and groundless cry against "creeds," and have fallen into the views of those from whose principles they widely dissent, we are fully aware, but we believe that Mr. Wright is correct in stating that to some at least of the Non-Subscribers in Ulster a cheap issue of the works of Theodore Parker would be welcome tidings. But admitting so much, we must strongly dissent from the opinion implied in the letter of Mr. Binns, that the Chris-

tian Unitarians of Ulster are the admirers of "a creed-bound ministry, a stationary theology, and an exhausted inspiration."

A creed-bound Church is one in which the free exercise of thought is trammelled by the interpretations which fallible men have placed upon the Scriptures, and in which the members are not at liberty to dissent from the dogmas of the Church without forfeiting membership. Such a Church is that of Rome, or England, or Scotland, in which men are bound to receive not the Scriptures merely, but the Church's interpretation of the Scriptures. But when a Church rejects all these creeds and confessions, and makes the Scriptures themselves "its only rule of faith," or, going farther, requires its ministers simply to acknowledge that they believe the Scriptures to contain a divine revelation, and leaves it to the judgment of each to interpret that revelation for himself, it is essentially a free Church, and can, in no proper sense, be called "creed-bound." But Mr. Binns, and those who agree with him, may say—the Scriptures themselves are a creed, and so is the acknowledgment of the divine mission of Christ. In one sense they are right; but, in reasoning thus, they are stepping out of Christianity into the broad plain of "free thought." They have a right to do so; and though we may regret that, in the exercise of their liberty, they should be led to abandon the divine authority which Christians, generally, attach to the holy doctrines, the pure precepts, and the comforting promises of the Gospel, we cannot, and ought not, to prevent them from expressing their opinions. But we beg that they will not sneer at us, and reproach us as "creed-bound," because we are too weak or too wise to follow them. It has been said again and again, by the present ministers of our Church, and by those from whom they inherited their principles, that the Scriptures are our creed. Let each interpret these Scriptures as he thinks right, reverently studying, but, at the same time, boldly criticizing them; and if any should arrive at the conclusion that there is no divine authority in Christ's teachings, we trust he will feel that it is time for him to retire from a Church whose foundation principle he has rejected.

When Mr. Binns alludes to "a stationary ministry,"

he should know that there is no reason why any minister should adopt the stand-still plan. Our Church is free, and each of its members is at full liberty to think for himself; and if Mr. Binns has made more progress and travelled farther than most of his brethren, he should not imagine that they are stationary because he is so much in advance of them. It would be daring indeed, in us, to pronounce inspiration exhausted, or to suppose that the spirit, which was poured without measure on the Son of God, might not endow with his miraculous power, and fill with his supernatural wisdom, others in successive generations. It would be presumptuous in us to say, that because God created this glorious world in which we live, he might not create other worlds in future time as beautiful and as glorious; but we dissent entirely from the opinion suggested by Mr. Binns, that the inspiration of Christ was common to him with that of Socrates and Plato, of Bacon and Newton, and other good and gifted men of past times and the present.

If the views which are now advocated in connexion with Non-Subscription gain currency, and develop themselves, that term, till lately, associated with contests for the truth of Christianity and struggles for freedom within its fold, must soon degenerate into an unmeaning word—the shibboleth of a party who shall, under its sanction, advocate the wildest and most reckless opinions: and we can readily believe that the time may come when some such magazine as the following may be issued—of course we only draw on our imagination, for we have no gift of prophecy:—“*The Fearless Free-Thinker; being the organ of the Irish Non-Subscribing Church,*” having conspicuously displayed on its titlepage the following characteristic mottoes:—“*Christ no Master for you or me.*” “*Our essential bond of union is free inquiry.*”

PEACE IN SEPARATION.

IN the course of the present year, various ecclesiastical changes have taken place in the Irish Non-Subscribing Church. Three congregations, which had been for nearly a century and a half connected with the Presbytery of

Antrim, by a unanimous vote withdrew from the body; a fourth congregation retired all but unanimously; and a fifth, by a large majority, resolved to withdraw, but by the obstructive policy of the minister and a few seatholders, they have been hindered, and they are at present in so anomalous a position that an appeal has been made to the law courts to determine what is their Presbyterial connexion. On the other hand, congregations, till lately attached to the Remonstrant Synod, have separated from it, and have joined the Presbytery of Antrim; three of them—York Street, Belfast; Greyabbey, and Ravara—by a unanimous vote; and a fourth, Moneyrea, by a large majority. Our Intelligence department contains a report of a fifth congregation,—Carrickfergus,—having also, by an alleged majority of votes, resolved to leave the Remonstrant Synod, and of the Presbytery of Antrim having received it under their care. These changes, if made with the concurrence of the seatholders, or of a decided majority of seatholders entitled to vote, are perfectly right, and no reasonable objection can be made to them. In every case there seems to be sufficient ground for the action that has been taken.

In reference to the congregations that seceded from the Presbytery of Antrim, they were constrained by a sense of duty to themselves and their families, and by their allegiance to Christ the Head of the Church, to make the change, painful though it was, as they could not remain in connexion with a body which, by a deliberate vote, indignantly rejected a resolution declaring that they should require from every candidate for the ministry, an acknowledgement of the divine authority of the Christian revelation. We know that some of those who supported this most extraordinary vote allege that it was the “imputations” and “insinuations” of the mover that called forth their indignation; but not so, for the mover only expressed the views of himself and those who felt with him, which may have been right or wrong. The Presbytery might have adopted the resolution as it was, or have so modified it as to declare their Christian principles, without endorsing the views or motives that led to its being proposed. They did not do so; they had already agreed to admit a congregation which, by one of its officers, had dis-

tinctly stated that it would not allow the Presbytery to ask the minister whom it might choose, any questions; and they most consistently carried out that policy by rejecting the resolution referred to. Here was ground distinct enough on which a secession took place and was justified. And so with the congregations which have joined the Presbytery of Antrim; they objected to candidates for ordination being obliged to signify their belief in God, and in Christ as the divinely-appointed Saviour; and therefore they have most naturally attached themselves to a body which will ordain any man whom a congregation chooses, *and ask no questions*. This is quite fair. Every congregation should be at perfect liberty to change its ecclesiastical connexion when there seems to it a sufficient reason for doing so.

A source of difficulty and a cause of bitterness have arisen from the irresponsible position in which the laws of the Church or the laws of the land seem to place the minister. In one of the disturbed congregations, the minister had first preached the doctrines generally received and most acceptable to the people, and for the advocacy and spread of which they had chosen him: afterwards he imbibed and inculcated views bordering very closely on unbelief; and lastly, his mind swung to the opposite extreme, and he preached doctrines akin to, or identical with, those of Emanuel Swedenborg. The people subjected to such a variety of teaching were certainly to be pitied, and we need not wonder that the congregation is now divided into three or more conflicting parties. In another congregation the minister resists the majority of the people, and seems to regard them as casting on him a personal slight, because they exercise their right and resolve to join a Presbytery more in accordance with their principles; while his friends argue that if only half a dozen seatholders should remain with him, they will be the congregation to the exclusion of all the rest. In all other cases the majority decides, but it appears that the minister in this case is more than the majority, and has supreme power!

Rumour whispers that other congregations contemplate withdrawing from the Remonstrant Synod; and if their views harmonize more with the ultra-liberal principles

recently adopted by the Presbytery of Antrim, they should certainly do so. During the progress of these changes there must be a little excitement, and, possibly, some bitter feelings; but by and by these will subside, and we trust that we shall find peace in separation. It would be a melancholy thing, if the strife which has prevailed, should long continue. It will be well for ministers and people, and for the cause of true religion, when the two parties shall be so completely separated that no farther ground for contention shall remain. Asperities which have arisen, and personal alienations which unhappily have taken place, may, in time, be removed, and ministerial intercourse may be renewed between some, who, differing in their views of church government, are yet agreed in doctrine, and gratefully acknowledge and distinctly preach him whom "the Father sent to be the Saviour of the world."

REVIEW.

WHAT IS UNITARIANISM? THE QUESTION ANSWERED. E. Whitfield. London, pp. 32.

THE question which the author of this tract undertakes to answer must be very puzzling to every inquirer. Unitarianism seems in the mind of some to be undefined and undefinable. Let a man only give up the doctrine of the Trinity, and though he may still hold in some sense the doctrines of Original Sin and a Vicarious Atonement, he is in strict language a Christian Unitarian, and of this class there are not a few in our denomination. On the other hand, if there are those who not only reject the leading dogmas of the Trinitarian Churches, but everything pertaining to Christianity, save respect for the character and admiration of the teachings of our Lord, they, too, are sometimes classed as belonging to the sect, and they are certainly entitled to be called Unitarians, however with much reason we may question their claim to be regarded as *Christian* Unitarians. It is interesting to examine the numerous statements which have been made of the prevailing belief of the Unitarian Church,

some of them clear, distinct, and explicit, as those of Dr. Channing and the Rev. J. S. Porter; and others so vague and shadowy, or so purely negative, that it is impossible to gather from them any distinct view of Unitarian doctrine. Those who aim at including in our Church all shades of opinion, from the merest Anti-Trinitarianism to pure Deism, might be expected to present us with a very bald and unsatisfactory statement of Unitarian doctrine; and so we find it. The tract before us, we are happy to say, is not faulty in this respect, and, coming from the pen of an English layman, is a gratifying evidence that sound Christian sentiments still prevail, notwithstanding the latitudinarian teaching which has become fashionable of late.

The writer states, in very simple language, the opinions of the Unitarian Church concerning *God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Atonement, and Future Punishment*. The views which he puts forward on each of these topics are supported by copious and well-selected passages of Scripture. He distinctly recognizes the miraculous in connexion with the mission of Christ, and thus speaks of the dignity which pertains to him, and the feelings of reverence and gratitude with which he is regarded:—

“Filling all these exalted offices, and having spent and given his life for the salvation of the human race, Christ ought to be, and is, regarded by us with feelings of the deepest veneration. We reverence and honour him as our great high priest, the chosen of God; we look to him as the way, the truth, and the life, as the medium through which we know and approach the Father; we love him fervently and intensely, because he lived and died for us, that he might bring us unto God, and has gone to prepare a place in the Heavenly Kingdom for all his faithful followers, and finally, because through appointment of God, he is to be our Judge, ‘for we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.’”

The writer's opinions are Humanitarian, but he does not, as some more advanced brethren are inclined to do, sneer at those who believe in Christ's pre-existence, and regard them as hardly entitled to the name of Unitarian.

After quoting such texts as, “I ascend to my God and your God,” “Christ is God's,” &c., the writer thus argues against the doctrine that Christ is God:—

“The passages quoted (and they form but a small number of those which might be cited) are sufficient, we think, to convince

any one who reads the Scriptures attentively, without prejudice or preconceived opinions, that Jesus Christ was not God. His disciples never regarded him as such: if they had, would they have omitted to disclose a fact of such awful and tremendous importance? Would they have dared to approach him on terms of equality? Would Judas have betrayed him? Would Peter have first rebuked and afterwards denied him? Would all of them have forsaken him and fled? Could they have imagined that he, who in their presence prayed to God, was himself the Almighty? If *they* did not know or imagine these things, how is it that men of a later age, who never saw Christ, and know little or nothing about him, except through the writings of *these very disciples and apostles*, should be so much wiser and more enlightened than they, and dare to tell us dogmatically, that if we do not believe that Jesus the Son of God was the very God himself, we have no chance of salvation, but must perish everlastingly?"

In the following passage the writer gives the views of Christian Unitarians respecting Future Punishment:—

"With regard to future punishment for sin, we believe that neither with regard to its duration, place, or manner, is anything definitely taught in Scripture. We are told that it will be severe, and all the imagery of parable is employed to deepen the impression, and to awaken that fear, which in some minds must be 'the *beginning* of Wisdom.' But confident in the wisdom and goodness of the Creator, we believe that it will all have a wise purpose, to correct, to purify, to complete the work (nay, may it not be in some cases to *begin* it?) which the discipline of earth is often unable to accomplish. Proportioned thus in severity to the guilt of the offender, it will surely not be continued longer than necessary to ensure his restoration to purity!

"The doctrine of *eternal* punishment is so horrible and revolting, that although the popular sects recognize it as an article of their belief, many of them are better than their creed, and in their heart of hearts disbelieve it, or, at all events, practically ignore it, and well they may; for if it were an undeniable verity, man had better never have been born, and could not exist under the dreadful gloom it would cast over life. Surely God, who created us with a tendency or liability to sin, and knows the weakness of our nature, and the many temptations which beset us, could never doom a poor frail imperfect creature to *eternal* perdition, for the infraction of a law, which even a perfect being could with difficulty keep in all its particulars? Just try to realise what *eternity* means. 'Suppose' (as some one well says) 'that a bird were to bring a single grain of sand once a year and deposit it in a particular place, until, in the courses of millions of ages, it had accumulated a heap as big as Mont Blanc, still as measured with eternity, its labour would only be just commencing;' and think of a poor sinner suffering all this time the torments of hell fire for the sins of a few short years, which, in comparison with the term of his punishment, would be less than a grain of dust to the whole world! No, spite of what a gloomy theology teaches, we cannot, and never

will, believe that Almighty God—the God of Love—will be so merciless as to consign his offspring to unremitting, undying, never-ending torments. We believe that the passages of Scripture on which the doctrine is supposed to rest, are, like many others in the Bible, merely figurative, and never ought to have been construed literally. What may be the nature of our future punishment no man can tell, but it seems to us that in exile and estrangement from God and Christ, and the Congregation of the just made perfect, and with an intensified sense of his guilt, and of the unbounded love of a God whom he has disobeyed and set at nought, the sinner will indeed, when he passes into a future state of being, endure an amount of anguish far beyond what mere physical suffering could inflict; but, blessed be God, we believe that this will cease and be no more—when the sinner has, by its trying discipline, become chastened and purified and made fit to enter the blessed assembly of the saints, and to sit down in white garments before the throne of God; so that at last all will be restored—not a wanderer lost,—when God shall wipe away all tears from all eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things shall have passed away.

“These views we conceive to be more in accordance with the object of punishment, and the character and purposes of God, and far more likely to make us love and serve him than the contrary doctrine, which may induce slavish fear, but never can produce that perfect love which casteth out fear.”

A LAYMAN'S CRITIQUE ON THE REV. S. C. NELSON'S LETTER TO THE “BOSTON REGISTER.”

THE *Boston Christian Register*, of Sept. 17, contains an article of some length, signed “Lay Observer,” criticising the views of Church Government which Mr. Nelson had set forth in his letter published in the *Register* of Sept. 6. The most remarkable portions of Mr. Nelson's letter we printed in our October number, and commented on them: the portions to which the following critique refers are only a repetition of views maintained by the majority of the Presbytery of Antrim, and already familiar to our readers. In justice to Mr. M'Alester, it is right to state that he did not say “that a large portion of the members of the Unitarian faith in England and Ireland hold views which drag Christianity down to a level with mere Deism,” but that there are two parties, one of which, by its principles, will admit into the ministry in its connexion those who acknowledge nothing divine or superhuman in Christ's mission, and thus bring Christianity down to the level of Deism.

CREEDS—FREE INQUIRY.

In behalf of his brethren of the Presbytery of Antrim (Ireland),

the Rev. Mr. Nelson, Moderator, indignantly repels, I perceive, the conclusions of the Rev. Mr. M'Alester of Belfast, that a large portion of the ministers of the Unitarian faith in England and Ireland hold views which "drag Christianity down to a level with mere Deism." He says that his brethren regard the testimony of Scripture with not less reverence than himself, "and that the charge of reducing Scripture to a level with any human composition whatever, is a calumny as foul as it is false."

This is strong language; and it may be that Mr. M'Alester's charges are only inferences from the *position* of the class as stated by Mr. Nelson himself in this communication. It is this—that "they were bound by no creed whatever—bow to no human authority," and "assert the right of private judgment"—and that it is a principle with them that, when a congregation is satisfied and have chosen a pastor, no one has "any right to impose at ordination or installation any test of belief *whatever* as a condition of religious communion." Mr. Nelson speaks of the exercise of any such pretended right as intolerant, and that his Presbytery (Association) hold to "the sufficiency of Scripture," as well as the "unconditional right of private judgment," refusing to "allow our frail and fallible fellow-mortals to usurp the power of framing tests of soundness," &c.; and that his Presbytery's "*essential* bond of union is free inquiry."

The few who survive amongst us here in New England, who took an interest in the rise of Unitarianism in the early part of the present century, well remember the stress laid upon the quotation from Chillingworth referred to. Channing, Freeman, the Wares, Kirkland, the Lathrop of that day, Thatcher, Parkman, Greenwood, Buckminster, Holley, Ripley, Bancroft, Thayer, and others, never dreamed of quoting the noble sentiment in support of religious societies without any religious belief; without any "creed or confession," the "essential bond of union being free inquiry"—mere "consultative assemblies for mutual improvement." And it is "melancholy" that the "free inquiry" of the present day has called forth the letter which is the subject of Mr. Nelson's complaint.

In reference to the imposition at "ordination or installation," take a case. At an ordination in Springfield, several years ago, a member of the Council expressed a desire, after all parts had been assigned, to hear from the candidate—a practice not obsolete in our churches. The Rev. Mr. Nute, to whom had been assigned the giving the fellowship of the churches, claimed as right and proper some elucidation of the candidate's religious impressions, doubtless in reference to what *he* deemed *essential*, and on the ground that he could not blindly give him the fellowship of the churches. Mr. Tiffany at once, in a few words, satisfied Mr. Nute and the Council; though it is not probable Mr. Nute or any other member had any serious doubts of the candidate's "orthodoxy." Was Mr. Nute right, or is it to be understood that he was "lording it over God's heritage?"

With "no test of belief whatever, as a condition of religious communion," so far as the principle affects ordination, it must apply with equal force to the communion of the Supper and Baptism

of adults. Was it *unreasonable* in Philip to require a simple test of the eunuch's sincerity, in a question that brought forth the very satisfactory reply, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." Paul has the misfortune to differ from Mr. Nelson (Gal. iii. 22, 26, 27, and in sundry other places) about "tests." If the latter is right, it may be that the requirements of civil law are all wrong in their bearings upon testimony, and fidelity in public servants. The institution of the Supper was for *disciples*, to strengthen their *faith* in the midst of "a crooked and perverse generation." If *faith* has nothing to do with it, the Antrim Association could not be expected to require "any test whatever." Christ preached to the great congregation, and before he was offered up gave special instruction for the benefit of *believers*, in all time. What would have been the sensations of Paul to have been told that eighteen hundred years hence his argument against the Judaizing Christians of his time (Rom. vii.) would be used as Gospel proof to justify an unauthorized relinquishment of any "test or belief whatever;" that sitting at the Lord's table with a "test" was serving in the "oldness of the letter;" whereas, simply partaking as a privilege was "serving in newness of spirit?" He would probably have replied in nearly the language of an eminent English divine of the present day, that a sermon should have some relation to the obvious meaning of the selected text.

I have sometimes thought, Mr. Editor, that it might be better should one or the other of the two classes of Christians (for both profess to be such, and doubtless with sincerity) change its distinctive appellation. A man may be a Unitarian, and nothing else in common with Unitarianism as a denomination. Those who *agree* might then *walk together*, each "knowing his own work"—"rejoicing in himself and not in another."

LAY OBSERVER.

LETTER OF THE REV. C. J. M'ALESTER TO THE BOSTON "CHRISTIAN REGISTER."

WE extract the following letter from the *Register* of October 18th. The subject to which it refers, though seemingly attracting some attention in New England, naturally possesses more interest for Unitarians in our own country, where the questions discussed have produced so much agitation.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "CHRISTIAN REGISTER."

SIR,—Your kindness in affording me an opportunity of correcting an erroneous statement which had, inadvertently as it afterwards appeared, found its way into your paper, leads me to hope that you will allow me space for a few sentences in reply to the letter of the Rev. S. C. Nelson, published in the *Register* of the 6th instant.

In my former letter I represented the Unitarian denomination in this country and in England as divided into two parties, one of which considers that no person should be admitted into the ministry of our Church who does not acknowledge the divine mission of our blessed Lord, while the other party seems to attach no importance

to such an acknowledgment, but to be willing to recognize as a minister in their communion any one whom a congregation may choose, though he should see nothing more divine or authoritative in the Gospel of Christ than in the philosophy of Plato, or the poetry of Milton; and I then went on to repel, with pardonable warmth, the imputation against our Magazine of being "the organ of an intolerant party," while it only aims at maintaining the principles of Christian Unitarianism, as I believe they are plainly set forth in the New Testament, and as they have been ably vindicated by many of the most gifted men in these countries and in yours.

The state of our Church, as I thus represented it, Mr. Nelson does not attempt to deny, nor could he; for evidence painfully abundant might be adduced to support it; but he diverts attention from the general statement which I made by assuring you that both he and his co-presbyters have the utmost reverence for the Scriptures, and that there is not a Deist among them. Now I never charged either him or any of his brethren in the Presbytery with Deism; but had I troubled you with the details of our denominational struggle in the North of Ireland for the last ten months, I might have told you that Mr. Nelson was one of those who, when the Rev. W. Bruce, the Rev. J. Scott Porter, and others, urged the necessity of requiring from every candidate for ordination an acknowledgment of the divine authority of revelation, "indignantly rejected" such a proposition, and, by a majority of votes, bound themselves to ordain any minister whom a congregation might choose, without asking any question, or making any inquiry respecting his Christian principles. By the reckless course thus pursued the Christian barriers which the founders of the Presbytery in 1726 had reared, when they organized this asylum of religious freedom, have been swept away, and the minority, headed by Mr. Bruce, whose ancestors, like himself, had been among its most distinguished members, and had given to it much of its respectability and influence, were constrained by a sense of duty to retire; and they have organized a new Presbytery, which is truly Protestant, recognizing the right of every one—minister and layman,—to interpret the Scriptures for himself; but at the same time really Christian, excluding from its pulpits those who, like your own Parker, spurn to acknowledge Christ as their Master, and repudiate the idea of a divinely authorized revelation. What Mr. Nelson designates as "inquisitorial assemblies," "tests of faith," and "incipient creeds," is simply what I have stated—an acknowledgment of the Divine in Christianity. We hold, like Mr. Nelson, the sufficiency of Scripture, but perhaps not in the same sense, for some in our time have very enlightened notions about that glorious Protestant principle; and we maintain with him the right of private judgment, but not perhaps to the same extent, for while he argues that every man has a right to judge for himself, and hold, without any interference on the part of others, whatever opinions he believes to be true, though they should be Popery on the one side, or Deism, or even Atheism, on the other, we do not think that a man has a right to deny the leading facts of the Gospel, and at the same time to hold the position of minister in a Christian Church. So far, and only so far, we are *exclusive*; and beyond this, others may have

a title to be liberal which we neither possess nor desire. The picture which Mr. Nelson has given you of ministers driven out of the country—the peace and health of their families destroyed; and of reckless men incited to obstruct a faithful pastor in the discharge of his duties, are the mere creations of his own brain. The circumstances to which he refers, had I space to explain them, would only show the just desire of Christian Unitarians to guard their Church against the intrusion of opinions which have already brought much discredit on our holy faith, and which, by their rapid spread, threaten entirely to overwhelm it.

The charge of slander which Mr. Nelson brings against me I do not heed: it is sometimes a convenient way of meeting an opponent's statements, when arguments and facts do not suit the purpose; but I do greatly regret that any of our ministers, however widely he may differ from a brother, and however warmly he may discuss important questions affecting, as both believe, the best interests of the body, should allow himself, under any excitement, to be drawn into the use of language so unbecoming and so unjustifiable. I have spoken and written much on the subjects that have recently agitated our denomination, and I may safely defy Mr. Nelson to point to any sentence I have written, or any expression I have uttered, that could justify the offensive language he has applied to me.

My former letter which you published in the *Register*, I printed in the *Christian Unitarian*, at least two weeks before Mr. Nelson replied, and I presume that it was in the *Unitarian* he saw it; you will judge then how unfairly he charges me with attempting to circulate in America statements which I would not dare to publish at home.—I am, Sir, yours respectfully,

C. J. M'ALESTER.

HOLYWOOD, Co. DOWN, Sept. 26, 1862.

INTELLIGENCE.

THE REV. JOHN HALL AND THE CONGREGATION OF BALLYCLARE.

[From the annexed Report of proceedings before the Master of the Rolls on Friday, the 21st of November, it will be seen that the application made on the part of the majority of the Congregation, though resisted by the Counsel for Mr. Hall and his friends, was granted by the Court. It will also be seen that the adherents of the Presbytery of Antrim,—a body which loudly proclaims its attachment to the rights of the laity, and which has so often, through the mouth of its Moderator, the Rev. Samuel C. Nelson, declared that Presbyteries are "*mere consultative bodies*,"—have sent Counsel into the Court to argue that the minister of Ballyclare is a man appointed by the Presbytery of Antrim; and that the Presbytery alone has the power of removing him. What will the laity, about whose rights we have heard so much vapouring declamation, say to this interpretation of the powers vested in a "*consultative body*"?]

ROLLS COURT—THE BALLYCLARE CONGREGATION.

In the matter of the Rev. John Hall and others, petitioners ; Alexander Galt and others, respondents.

Mr. BREWSTER, Q.C., appeared in this case on the part of the respondents, to apply for a postponement of the hearing of the cause, until an information filed at the relation of James Alexander, James Gregg, and other members of the Congregation of Ballyclare, could be heard by the Court. That information prayed that it might be declared to have been the usage of the Presbytery of Antrim and of the Congregation of Ballyclare, for more than twenty-five years, that the minister should attend whatever Presbytery the Congregation was attached to for the time being ; that it might also be declared to be the usage that any Congregation might, by the votes of the majority of the stipend-payers, be at liberty to withdraw from the Presbytery, and become attached to any other Presbytery ; that the Congregation of Ballyclare having, by a vote of a majority of the stipend-payers, withdrawn from the Presbytery of Antrim, and joined the Northern Presbytery, it may be declared attached thereto ; and that the Rev. John Hall be restrained by the injunction of the Court from attending the Presbytery of Antrim as the minister of the Ballyclare Congregation ; that the Rev. John Hall, William Adamson, and others, be restrained from disturbing or molesting the Committee of the Congregation, in the peaceful enjoyment of the meeting-house, or in the discharge of their respective duties ; that it may be referred to one of the Masters of the Court to appoint proper persons as trustees, in whom the legal estate of the meeting-house may be vested ; and that the relators may be declared entitled to the costs of the suit.

The SOLICITOR-GENERAL opposed the motion on the part of the relators in the first suit. He said it was against the practice of the Court to grant such an application. The minister of a congregation could not be removed by the Court, or by any other power than the Presbytery. It was admitted that the Rev. John Hall had been appointed by the Presbytery, and was forcibly prevented, on the 6th of April last, from exercising his undoubted right to act as minister of the congregation to which he had been duly appointed by the Presbytery ; and the Court granted an order restraining the respondents from interfering with him further until after the hearing of that cause. The respondents now asked that the hearing of that cause should be postponed until after the hearing of the information filed at the relation of the respondents, though they asked the Court in the information to do what it had not the power to do. If the Court even decided that the Rev. Mr. Hall should not attend the Presbytery of Antrim, but should attend the Northern Presbytery, what had that to do with the order asked, that the respondents should be restrained from interfering with the Rev. Mr. Hall in the celebration of Divine worship as minister of the Church of Ballyclare ?

MASTER OF THE ROLLS—Have the congregation taken steps to attach themselves to the Northern Presbytery of Antrim ?

Mr. BREWSTER—They have, my lord.

MASTER OF THE ROLLS—Is there any document from the new Presbytery removing the Rev. Mr. Hall ?

The SOLICITOR-GENERAL said there was not. Their case is that he is now their minister, and that he should be forced to attend another Presbytery. They set up their right to join another Presbytery, but that had nothing to do with his being their minister, and, if he is their minister, he must not be prevented from celebrating Divine worship, as such.

Mr. ANDREWS followed on the same side, and Mr. FITZGIBBON replied for the respondents.

The MASTER OF THE ROLLS said he thought it would be better to postpone the hearing of the injunction cause till the first day of next term. He should not like to dispose of it now, as that would be pre-judging the case on the other side, as set up in the information. The Rev. Mr. Hall, it was admitted, was the regularly appointed Minister of the Congregation of Ballyclare. There was no question of doctrine involved in the case, but, as he understood, merely one of discipline. It was clear that the respondents did not understand their own case, for, if they made inquiries, they would find that no Presbyterian congregation in Ireland had the power to turn out their minister. If they had a cause of complaint with him, they must bring it before the Presbytery. They said they had a right to go over to the Northern Presbytery of Antrim. He (the Master of the Rolls) offered no opinion upon that; but, if they had that right, they might complain of the Rev. Mr. Hall if they had any complaint against him. The Presbytery might have the power to remove him, but certainly the congregation had not the power. If they were attached to the new Presbytery, that body might inquire into any cause of complaint against the Rev. Mr. Hall, and deal with it. He would be astonished if it was held by the Presbyterians that a congregation could remove a minister without the sanction of the Presbytery. The Court should, under those circumstances, protect the Rev. Mr. Hall in his office until he was removed by a legal body. If the Rev. Mr. Hall were removed by the new Presbytery, it would raise the question whether Presbyterian congregations could change their ministers.

After some discussion the case was ordered to stand over till next term. The petitioners in the mean time to answer the information. The costs of the motion to be costs in the cause.

[We understand that, in consequence of a memorial from the Northern Presbytery of Antrim, setting forth the circumstances of the Congregation of Ballyclare, his Excellency the Lord Lieutenant has been pleased to signify his pleasure that the words, "*in connexion with the Presbytery of Antrim*," shall be omitted in the form of receipt for Royal Bounty, to be submitted henceforth to the Rev. John Hall, as minister of said Congregation.]

FREE CHRISTIAN SOCIETY, BIRMINGHAM.

The first anniversary services of this society took place on Sunday, Sept. 7th, in the Unitarian Church, Newhall Hill, when two able and earnest sermons were preached by the Rev. F. R. Young, of Swindon. After the services collections amounting to £22 4s 5d were made in aid of the Sunday School and other agencies of the society.

The first annual tea meeting of the members and friends of the society was held on the following evening, in the large school-room under the Newhall Hill Church. The chair was taken by Mr. Reuben Taylor, solicitor, who, after a few introductory remarks, called upon Mr. G. R. Twinn, the secretary, to read the report.

It entered into an explanation of the circumstances which led to the formation of the society, and minutely detailed the various agencies already in operation to improve the humble classes, and especially to promote their religious culture. It appears that when the congregation in Birmingham, of which the excellent and earnest-minded Mr. Bache is the pastor, removed to their new and beautiful church, a desire was felt by many of the Sunday-school Teachers to continue their labours in the locality of the old church, especially as the closing of the schools would have been a loss to the district.

In the course of the evening, the Rev. F. R. Young gave an interesting account of the establishment and progress of the Free Christian Church at Swindon.

The meeting was addressed by Revs. F. R. Young, C. Clarke, W. M'Kean, W. O. M'Gowan, Messrs. S. B. Whitfield, H. Solomon, E. Ridge, G. Mason, B. Whitehouse, and A. B. Matthews.

[We hope that this new organization possesses the sympathy and aid of the congregation out of which it has sprung, and that it will be instrumental in disseminating those eminently Christian principles which have characterized the ministry of the New Meeting, Birmingham, from the days of Joseph Priestley to the present time. It is worthy of remark, and not a discouraging circumstance, that in the report, of which the secretary has kindly sent us a copy, the members of the society are several times spoken of as "*Christian Unitarians*." We know that in this country such an appellation would be designated by the *London Inquirer* as "a misnomer," and by others as "a stiletto thrust at their opponents;" but what to these amiable critics is wrong in Ireland, may possibly be all right in England.—ED. CH. UN.]

INSTALLATION OF THE REV. W. O. M'GOWAN.

On Wednesday, November 13th, the Presbytery of Antrim met at Ravara for the purpose of installing the Rev. W. Orr M'Gowan as pastor of that congregation. Before the services of the day commenced, a memorial was presented to the Presbytery by commissioners from the Congregation of Carrickfergus, praying that that worshipping Society might be received under their care. It appeared, from the statement of the commissioners, that on the previous Sunday the congregation had, by a majority of votes, resolved to withdraw from the Remonstrant Synod, and to join the Presbytery of Antrim. The memorial having been submitted, and also the congregational resolution, and a letter from the Rev. Dr. Montgomery to the Moderator, it was agreed that the consideration of the matter be deferred to another meeting to be specially convened; and the services were then proceeded with.

The Rev. W. HALL conducted the religious services, and preached from 2 Cor. iii. 20. The Rev. H. Moore defended Presbyterian ordination. After referring to the practice of the primitive church,

and explaining the distinction between the form of ordination and installation, he went on to say—If Mr. McGowan were a very young man, appearing before us for the first time as a candidate for license to preach the Gospel, we would, in accordance with the uniform practice of the Presbytery of Antrim, endeavour to ascertain, either by personal inquiries or by testimonials from trustworthy parties, that he had received a regular education; that the faculties of his mind were fairly unfolded; that he had shown himself to be acquainted with the Scriptures, and well qualified to illustrate their doctrines, and to enforce their precepts; that he adhered to those great principles by which our Church has been distinguished since the period of its formation up till the present time—namely, the sufficiency of the Scriptures as a rule of faith and practice, and the right of private judgment in matters of religion, to the rejection of all human tests, creeds, or confessions of faith. But, my Christian brethren, this is not the case. He prosecuted his studies, with a view to the Christian ministry, under the superintendence of the Presbytery of Bangor, by whom he was licensed to preach the Gospel of Christ, having undergone the usual examinations, and by whom he was ordained to the work of the ministry in the old and respected Christian Congregation worshipping at Greyabbey. He was afterwards installed by the Presbytery of Templepatrick—a body also distinguished for its enlightened principles and its Christian spirit for a long series of years—as minister of the Christian Congregation of Raloo, which, a short time before, had seceded from the neighbouring congregation, and erected themselves a temple in which they might worship their God and observe the ordinances of the Gospel in accordance with the dictates of their own conscience.* Latterly, he was the minister of a Christian congregation in England for a period of upwards of seven years, by whom he was chosen to minister in holy things, having been welcomed as a fellow-labourer in the vineyard of his Master by the Midland Association of Ministers. While the Presbytery of Antrim has never, in any instance, put doctrinal tests to candidates for license, ordination, or installation, but has contented itself by personal inquiry or otherwise as to the fitness of the person for the work in which he is about to engage, and especially whether, with Chillingworth, he takes the Bible as his creed, and regards the Scriptures as a sufficient rule of faith and of practice, it has been the uniform practice to request the person chosen to state, for the satisfaction of the congregation, and that there may be no ground for misapprehension hereafter, clearly and distinctly his views on entering on the work of the ministry, and to answer any questions the congregation or the installing ministers may choose to put to him.

* This reference to the formation of the Raloo Congregation is calculated to mislead, implying as it does, that those who organized it were previously connected with a congregation in which they could not worship according to the dictates of their conscience; and the Rev. C. Porter, of Larne, to whose congregation the large proportion of them had belonged, has published a letter showing that the Raloo Meeting house was erected to afford them a more convenient place of worship, as they lived at a great distance from Larne, and that he and the leading members of his congregation were chiefly instrumental in its erection, and have always been ready, when occasion required, to give substantial evidence of their desire to support it.

Mr. M'GOWAN gave a lengthened statement of his belief, and the Congregation having expressed themselves satisfied, the Rev. John Porter, Belfast, delivered the charge to the minister and people, and the benediction was pronounced.

At the termination of the proceedings, the members of the congregation entertained the Presbytery and the other strangers at dinner, served up in the Session-room.

CARRICKFERGUS CONGREGATION.

An adjourned special meeting of the Presbytery of Antrim was held in Belfast, on Nov. 14, to consider the memorial presented to the Presbytery at Ravara on the previous Wednesday, from an alleged majority of the Carrickfergus Congregation, praying to be received into their body. After a statement made by Mr. James Andrews, Commissioner, it was moved and unanimously resolved, that the prayer of the memorial be complied with. [We think it right to report so much; but as there are grave doubts whether the action of the Presbytery can be sustained, and as we understand that overtures of a most equitable nature have been made by the Committee of the Synod in order to prevent litigation, and to promote a peaceable settlement of disputed points, we refrain for the present from detailing the particulars of the Presbytery's proceedings, of the previous congregational meeting, and of subsequent occurrences.]

THE REV. FRANKLIN BRADLEY.

The Rev. F. Bradley, late minister of the Unitarian Congregation of Ravara, and formerly of Crediton, England, left London some weeks ago for Auckland, New Zealand, accompanied by his father and the other members of his family. He takes with him a grant of books and tracts from the Belfast Unitarian Society, and from the Northern Sunday-school Association; and it is hoped that he will be instrumental in gathering together a liberal congregation in that flourishing Colony.

OBITUARY.

Died, on the 9th November, Ann, second daughter of John Davidson, Esq., Drumaness. Endeared to her family and friends by her amiable and engaging manners, sweet domestic virtues, and unaffected kindness of disposition, she was sustained during her tedious illness by the principles of genuine Christian piety, which she had early and largely imbibed, and at the hour of her departure abundantly possessed the cheering and blessed hope of immortality.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Dr. Montgomery's promised article came too late for insertion; it shall appear next month.

Communications for the Editor, to be addressed by post to Rev. C. J. M'Alister, Holywood; or, otherwise, to 45, Arthur Street, Belfast.

THE
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THE QUESTION STATED.

THE year which now closes has been eventful in the history of Non-Subscription in Ulster. In one of the ecclesiastical bodies which maintain Non-Subscribing principles, a disruption has taken place, while in the other, which is more numerous, but less ancient, there have been commotions and secessions. As is usually the case in contests for great principles, personal and local disagreements have been mixed up with the general question, and have tended to draw away the mind of many from the great principle which lies at the foundation of the controversy, and gives to it all its meaning and importance.

A persevering effort has also been made by some to resolve the discussion into the question of *Creeds or no Creeds*. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Both parties are agreed in most heartily condemning Creeds, and resisting every attempt to impose them. But the word "Creed" is sometimes ingeniously employed in a new and unjustifiable sense, to suit a purpose. Whatever a man believes, it is confidently alleged, is a Creed; and to require a candidate for the ministry to declare his belief in any thing, is to deprive him of liberty of thought in religious matters, and to impose upon him a *Creed*! In that way it might be contended that, to require a candidate to acknowledge Christianity in any form—to express his belief even in the precepts of Christ—is to interfere with his freedom; and by this mode of argument the pulpits of our churches would be open not only to Christians, but to Deists, Pantheists, and even to Atheists! The meaning which has always, in the history of Protestantism, been attached to the word "Creed," is a *human interpretation of Scripture*; and the ground on which Creeds have been resisted is that, while God has given us a revelation of his will in the Holy Scriptures,

every man has a right to exercise his own judgment in their interpretation. We repeat, therefore, that the controversy which has been waged is not a question of Creeds, and those who play upon the traditional and deeply-rooted antipathy of our Non-Subscribing laity to the exercise of human authority in religion, in order to draw them over to their side, are acting a disingenuous and deceitful part. We believe there is not a Non-Subscribing minister or layman in Ulster who desires to impose his own particular opinion on his neighbour,—not one who does not abhor the imposition of a Creed, as heartily at least as those who use “No Creed” as a watchword to inflame the passions of the ignorant or unreflecting.

The great question in which all the recent discussions centre is—“Shall we make an acknowledgment of the Divine authority of the Christian Revelation a necessary qualification in those who are appointed as pastors in our congregations?” In other words—“Shall we require those who undertake to preach the Gospel to our people, to admit its Divine authority?” This principle of Divine authority in revelation lay at the foundation of our Church, as it was formed by venerable Christian men of a past century; and if it be removed, the Church which rests on it must sink into ruin. Our fathers rejected the Articles and Confessions of the several Protestant Churches, as well as the dogmas and traditions of the Church of Rome, because they were human and fallible; and they upheld the Scriptures as “the only Rule of Faith,” because they believed them to contain a Divine revelation. They refused to bind themselves to any human leader, but they gladly and gratefully acknowledged Christ as their Lord and Master, because they believed in his Divine mission. Without a belief in the Divine element, there would have been no meaning in the allegiance which they cherished to Christ, and the reverence which they entertained for the Scriptures. A just and candid criticism has proved that some portions of the writings which are circulated as the Scriptures are not to be regarded as authoritative, and therefore we do not say, as our ancestors would have said, that the Scriptures, as we have them, are in every part the Word of God; but we contend that they contain a Divine revelation, and hence their value and authority.

But it may be said that those who advocate a Free Church, into which all will be received as members, "*and no questions asked*," believe, as much as their opponents, in the Divine authority of revelation. If so, then we ask, why do they refuse to require its acknowledgment? It can only be because, while they hold such a faith themselves, they regard it as an unimportant point, and desire to have a Church into which ministers may be admitted, whatever may be their opinions about revelation. We have been told by an Elder connected with the "no question party," that he was sure the Presbytery of Antrim, to which he belongs, would license, ordain, or instal no man unless they were previously satisfied that he believed in Christ's Divine mission. We replied—"Let them embody that principle in words, and adopt it as their rule, and at once peace and union will be restored, old attachments, recently broken up, will be renewed, and the Non-Subscribing Church, now divided into two parties, whose energies are spent in conflict with each other, will co-operate for the spread of a Gospel which is Divine in its origin, rational in its doctrines, pure and holy in its precepts, precious in its consolations, and glorious in its promises."

That those among the laity who are leaning to Deism, or have embraced it, should support those ministers who have opposed the Divine mission of the Saviour as a foundation principle of the Church, is not to be wondered at, and we have found them manifesting a zeal and a generosity which might have awakened suspicion; but how those who cling to the Gospel as their source of spiritual light and strength, comfort and salvation, can regard the controversy with indifference, or fancy it to be a mere personal quarrel, we are at a loss to conceive. Do they suppose that all the apprehensions which have been expressed about our Non-Subscribing Church are groundless, and that there is no danger of its Scriptural foundation being undermined? We point then to England, where in several places, under the hallowed name of Unitarianism, a partnership seems to have been formed between Deism and Christianity, and the cold and heartless principles of scepticism and unbelief have been profanely baptized with the name of Christ. Our opponents in the controversy allege that they have the

sympathy of their "enlightened" English brethren. So they have, and hence the danger that, having opened their hearts for their sympathy, they may open their minds to their opinions, and their pulpits to their teachings. For all this they have prepared the way, by resolving that candidates for the ministry in their churches shall not be required to acknowledge a belief in Christ's Divine mission.

"M Y P S A L M."

ALL as God wills, who wisely heeds
To give or to withhold;
And knoweth more of all my needs
Than all my prayers have told!

Enough that blessings undeserved
Have marked my erring track;
That wheresoe'er my feet have swerved,
His chastening turned me back;

That more and more a Providence
Of love is understood,
Making the springs of time and sense
Sweet with eternal good:

That death seems but a covered way
Which opens into light,
Wherein no blinded child can stray
Beyond the Father's sight.

That care and trial seem at last,
Through memory's sunset air,
Like mountain ranges over-past,
In purple distance fair:

That all the jarring notes of life
Seem blending in a psalm,
And all the angles of its strife
Slow rounding into calm.

And so the shadows fall apart,
And so the west winds play;
And all the windows of my heart
I open to the day.

J. W. WHITTIER.

AUTHORSHIP OF THE PENTATEUCH.

THE publication of Bishop Colenso's book,* and the great notoriety which it has gained, afford an opportunity for briefly discussing a question which, under ordinary circumstances, would probably fail to interest any considerable number of readers;—we mean the authorship and historical authority of the books commonly called the *Five Books of Moses*. We enter the more readily on the consideration of this subject, as we are convinced that a free and candid examination of it will tend to clear away some painful doubts which can hardly fail to have presented themselves to many minds, and will strengthen the foundations of faith.

The common belief of Jews and Christians is that the Pentateuch, as we now have it in our hands, was written by Moses; and that every part of it was inspired by God. On the first of these points, the Jewish creed, drawn up by the famous Rabbi Maimonides, and now universally accepted in the synagogues, is very explicit:—"I believe with a perfect faith, that the whole Pentateuch which we have in our hands at this day, was delivered by Moses our master. May he rest in peace!" (*Art. viii.*) On the latter point, the words of Burgon, cited by Bishop Colenso, (p. 6.) express what is probably the general faith of Christendom,—"*The Bible is none other than the Voice of Him that sitteth upon the Throne! Every book of it—every chapter of it—every verse of it—every word of it—every syllable of it—(where shall we stop?)—every letter of it, is the direct utterance of the Most High! The Bible is none other than the Word of God—not some part of it more, some part of it less—but all alike—the utterance of Him that sitteth upon the Throne—absolute—faultless,—unerring—supreme!*" But this tremendous theory, which would make the Almighty answerable for every narrative, every sentiment, every expression, not only in the Pentateuch but in the entire Bible, can only find acceptance with the unreflecting multitude; and has long since been either openly or tacitly abandoned by

* *The Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua Critically Examined.* By the Right Reverend JOHN WILLIAM COLENSO, Bishop of Natal. London, 1862. (Labelled on the back, Part I.)

every writer who has the slightest pretensions to the name of a critic or of a scholar.

On the other point, namely, the authorship of these venerable books, (for venerable they are, on every theory of their origin)—opinions have been more divided. The majority of the learned men who have applied their minds to the question, are probably still of opinion that Moses was the writer; but several persons, both Jews and Christians, who have examined the question carefully and critically, have come to a different conclusion. Leaving out of view the German Rationalists, (whose predetermination to reject everything that implies supernatural interposition, deprives their opinion of all weight,)—we may mention the names of Aben-Ezra, the most celebrated and judicious of the Jewish commentators,*—Andrews Norton, perhaps the most eminent of the defenders of Christianity in the present century,† Dr. Davidson,‡ and Bishop Colenso. All these have felt themselves constrained, by the force of evidence and their allegiance to truth, to avow their belief that the Pentateuch was not composed by Moses, nor by any writer of his time; that, though of venerable antiquity with reference to us, it is, comparatively with the times of which it treats, of very modern date; and Norton and Colenso add that, viewed as a whole, the historical *vis probandi* of its statements is small indeed. Nor does Mr. Higginson, in his *Spirit of the Bible*, differ essentially from this view; though he does not altogether embrace it. He conceives that in the Pentateuch we have a work which proceeded from the pen of Moses, but which has been, in very many places, altered and interpolated by later hands; by whom, or when, we know not.

In order to clear away rubbish that would block up the entrance to this inquiry, we must state that the titles which are prefixed to these books in our English version of the Scriptures, "*The First Book of Moses, called Genesis;*"

* See, in the *Rabbinical Bible*, his Commentary on Deut. i. 1.

† In the Additional Note, D, appended to his great work, "*Evidence of the Genuineness of the Gospels.*" It is an elaborate Dissertation which exhausts the whole subject, and occupies upwards of 100 pages in the 2nd edition of the book.

‡ In the 10th edition of Horne's "*Introduction to the Holy Scriptures,*" Vol. II. p. 593, &c: (*Authorship and Date of the Pentateuch.*)

"*The Second Book of Moses, called Exodus,*" &c., &c., are altogether modern, and of no authority whatever. No manuscript of the original Hebrew exists in which these books are so entitled. In the original, each is named from its first word, or the first important word in its first verse: thus Genesis is called *B'reshith*, "In the beginning;" Exodus, *Shemoth*, "The Names;" Numbers, *B'midhbar*, "In the Wilderness," &c. Nor do these books, in any part of their contents, claim to have been the offspring of the pen of Moses. This is the more remarkable, as the last four books of the Pentateuch are occupied almost exclusively with the life and transactions of that great man. Not only is his name found in almost every page and paragraph, but he is recorded to have been a *writer*, and some of his writings are mentioned in the narrative. It is stated that he wrote an account of the discomfiture of the Amalekites by Joshua, (Exod. xvii. 14;) that he also wrote what is called the *Book of the Covenant*, (Exod. xxiv. 4—7,) which manifestly comprehended the divine precepts contained in the 20th, 21st, 22nd, and 23rd chapters of Exodus; and lastly, that he wrote an account of the journeyings or encampments of the Israelites on their departure from Egypt. This document is quoted as an authority by the writer of the Pentateuch, (Num. xxxiii. 1, 2)—"These are the journeyings of the children of Israel, who went forth out of the land of Egypt with their armies, under the hand of Moses and Aaron; *for Moses wrote their goings out, according to their journeys, by the command of Jehovah*, and these are their journeys according to their goings out." Had Moses been the author of the Pentateuch, it would have been needless for him to cite any authority for a statement of what took place under his own command, still less would he have quoted for that purpose a document written by himself.

Not only does the Pentateuch never affirm that Moses was its author, but it speaks of him in a manner which he certainly would not have employed in speaking of himself. "The man Moses, also, *was very great in the land of Egypt*, in the sight of Pharaoh's servants, and in the sight of the people," (Exod. xi. 3.) "Now the man Moses *was very meek, above all the men which were upon*

the face of the earth," (Num. xii. 3.) "This is the blessing wherewith *Moses the man of God* blessed the children of Israel before his death," (Deut. xxxiii. 1.) "*And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom Jehovah knew face to face,*" (Deut. xxxiv. 10.) Those who believe that Moses would write of himself in terms so lofty and eulogistic, may ascribe to him what graces and virtues they please, but it is plain that they cannot place modesty and humility among the number. Not only does the Pentateuch thus praise Moses in a strain which no historian ever employed in speaking of himself, but it everywhere speaks of him as a total stranger both to the author and his contemporaries. Having occasion to mention the names of Moses and Aaron, in a pedigree of the family of Levi, the historian adds:—"These were that Aaron and Moses to whom Jehovah said, 'Bring out the children of Israel from the land of Egypt according to their hosts.' These were they who spake to Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring out the children of Israel from Egypt: these were that Moses and Aaron," (Exod. vi. 26, 27.) Would Moses have written thus?

Add to this the frequent references which we find in these books to historical events, which did not take place till long after the days of Moses. The last chapter of Deuteronomy describes his death. He went up to the top of Pisgah, which is over against Jericho; "and Jehovah shewed him all the land of Gilead unto *Dan*, and all *Naphtali*, and all the land of *Ephraim* and *Manasseh*, and all the land of *Judah*, unto the utmost sea," (regions which only gained these names after he was dead and buried :) "And he *died there in the land of Moab*. . . . but no man knoweth of his sepulchre *unto this day*." This implies the lapse of a long series of years to allow time for the burial of Moses, the erection of his sepulchre, the fading away of its memory from the minds of men, and the apparently long but fruitless search for it in after ages. "And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom Jehovah saw face to face, in all the signs and wonders which Jehovah sent him to do in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all his land, and in all that mighty hand, and in

all the great terror which Moses shewed in the sight of all Israel:" a passage which, (as it shews that, previously to the date of its composition, prophets had arisen who possessed miraculous powers, though inferior to those bestowed upon Moses,) could not have been composed till after the times of Elijah and Elisha; that is, not before the reign of the later kings of Israel.

But this, though it is the most striking, is by no means the only, nor perhaps the strongest proof of the modern origin of the Five Books. The writer of them manifestly lived and wrote after the expulsion of the Canaanites from Palestine ("And the Canaanite *was then in the land*:" Gen. xii. 6.) He wrote at a time when the kingly form of government had been established among the Hebrews ("Now these are the kings who reigned in the land of Edom, *before there reigned any king over the children of Israel*:" Gen. xxxvi. 31.) He certainly dwelt to the west of the Jordan, a river which Moses never crossed. ("These are the words which Moses spake unto all Israel *beyond the Jordan** in the wilderness:" Deut. i. 1.) He knew Mount Moriah by its modern name, the "Mount of Jehovah," (Gen. xxii. 14) which it did not acquire till after the erection of the temple by Solomon. Speaking of events that happened during the life of Moses, he occasionally says that their effects remained "*even unto this day*," (Deut. iii. 14: Deut. x. 8,) a formula which implies the lapse of many intervening years. The first of these passages will illustrate the argument, "Jair the son of Manasseh took all the country of Argob unto the coasts of Geshuri and Maachathi, and called them after his own name, Bashan-havoth-Jair, *unto this day*." "Unto this day" implies a long interval between the fact and the record; yet Moses died within a few months after the seizure of these territories. Places are described by names which they did not bear till a comparatively modern date. In Gen. xiv. 14, the city of *Dan* is mentioned: but its ancient name was Laish; and it was not called Dan till after the conquest of Canaan by Joshua; (see Judges xviii. 29.) Sometimes the author explains an old or obsolete name by the more modern designation of the same

* Our English translators say "*on this side Jordan*:" but the original says distinctly *on the farther side*.

place. "Kirjath-arba; *the same is Hebron*," (Gen. xxiii. 2.) "Ephrath, *which is Bethlehem*," (Gen. xxxv. 19.) Having occasion to speak of the Omer, a measure which was used in the time of Moses, he explains that it was equivalent to the tenth part of an Ephah, (Exod. xvi. 36.) The land of Canaan is called "The land of the Hebrews," (Gen. xc. 15.) It could not be called so till after the conquest by Joshua. The Israelites are exhorted to keep the statutes of Jehovah, "lest the land spue you out also when ye defile it, as it spued out the nations that were before you," (Lev. xviii. 28.) This could not have been written till after the expulsion of the Canaanites.* Many circumstances of this kind will occur to every attentive reader of the Bible.

To all this must be added a circumstance which we can scarcely illustrate by examples, because it depends less on particular expressions than on the tenour and context of the whole narrative unfolded in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. We think no one accustomed to the study of history can peruse these books without a *feeling* that he has before him a work intended not for the Israelites in the wilderness, or in the land of Moab, but for persons of an age long subsequent to theirs. To the men who had witnessed the events recorded in these writings, the details which are introduced would have been needless, and therefore tedious. No author thinks it necessary to describe with copious particularity the occurrences which have taken place, not only under his own eye, but under the eyes of the men for whom he writes; in which they have themselves borne a part; which in fact they have themselves performed under his direction; occurrences with which they are as perfectly acquainted as he is himself; and which they are in no danger of forgetting. We may refer, by way of comparison, to the "Orders of the day" in which great commanders sometimes, at the close of a campaign, address the troops whom they have led to victory. Nothing can be more brief and pithy than such documents. The General reminds his soldiers that

* So also in Deut. ii. 12, "The Horites also formerly dwelt in Seir, but the children of Esau dispossessed them, and *dwelt in their stead*, as the Israelites *did to the land of their possession, which Jehorah gave to them*." But it is needless to multiply examples.

they have borne privations, overcome obstacles, crossed mountains, waded rivers, stormed fortresses, defeated armies, and earned the gratitude of their country, and the admiration of posterity. But all is expressed with the same brevity of which what we have just said is a sample. Not so do the historians of after ages describe the achievements of the national hero and his army. They delight in details. Nothing is uninteresting that brings the great achievements of the commander and his troops vividly before the reader's mind. Now the second and third chapters of the book of Deuteronomy are introduced as a proclamation of the former sort. Can anything be more unlike the style of such documents? The enumeration of particulars is as minute as it would have been needful to make it after the lapse of centuries. To what purpose this lengthened and tiresome account of operations which had taken place a few months previously, addressed as it must have been, if Moses was the author, to the very men who were fresh from performing them?

We know what has been replied to all these arguments, and others of the same kind, by critics whom we respect. The usual answer to every such difficulty is that *the text has been corrupted!* Transcribers have tampered with the statements of the historian; they have intermixed their own glosses and interpolations with the genuine work of Moses: and while they held it—as we know they did,—to be an impious heresy to deny that the whole Pentateuch proceeded from his pen, they have laboured hard to bring it into such a form that no one who reads it can believe it to be his! Such are the usual replies.

Of this explanation it is obvious to remark, that it assumes such a *wide, general, and systematic corruption of the text*, as would make the Pentateuch valueless for the purposes of history. Supposing that Moses had written the books, but that some one else in after times had taken it upon him to add to their contents in this fashion, who can tell how far his sacrilegious hand carried its nefarious operations? Where was it arrested? Did it *alter* as well as *add*? Did it *omit* as well as *add and alter*? We could place no reliance on a book which had been thus treated. In fact this hypothesis would do far more to destroy the authority and use of the Pentateuch than that of Bishop Colenso or Andrews Norton.

We may remark, further, that there is not the slightest historical ground for such an assumption. No ancient MS., no version of the Bible exists, in which the passages to which we have referred are not found. This is not a case similar to that of the *Woman taken in Adultery*, or the *Three Heavenly Witnesses*; for in them the oldest and best authorities prove that the passages objected to are spurious; whereas here the oldest and best authorities,—indeed all authorities, without exception,—prove them to be genuine. The attempted explanation is a mere unauthorized and uncritical assumption, as destitute of probability as it is of proof.

And lastly, we add that no such hypothesis is admissible in any similar case, for the purpose of establishing the date of any book whatever. The antiquity of the Pentateuch is to be ascertained by the very same rules of historical evidence by which the antiquity of any other writing is to be determined. Now if any one were to argue, from similar premises, in favour of the antiquity of any other writing, he would be condemned as ignorant of the first principles of historical criticism. Suppose that some admirer of the *Æneid* were to endeavour to raise our veneration for it to a high pitch, on the ground of its being not merely a beautiful poem but one of very great antiquity, and were, for that purpose, desirous of persuading us that it was actually written by *Æneas himself*, whose achievements it records: should we not think him sufficiently refuted by pointing out the contradiction to his theory afforded by the contents of the book itself? Might we not say to him, “It is impossible that this work can have been written by *Æneas*: for it describes his death. It contains allusions and references to events which happened long after his time; to the foundation of Rome; to her kings; to her consuls; to the men of later times; the young Marcellus; Julius and Augustus Cæsar, &c. &c.; to the wars and conquests of the empire,” and so forth. And should we be satisfied if he were to say of every such passage when pointed out, “*This is not genuine—that is interpolated:—the third is the production of a later age,*” &c. &c. Would not our reply be,—“You are arguing against facts, and you rely on your own dreams. You require me to strike out of my *Æneid*, passages, which, so far as history holds forth her

light, have been in the poem from the beginning! *The Æneid*, for whose antiquity you contend, *is not that which now exists*, but one which is yet to be written. The world has never seen it; and perhaps, if you were to attempt to reproduce what you believe to be the genuine work, you would find that you would be obliged to tear to pieces the whole frame-work of the poem, and produce a result as little satisfactory to yourself as it would be to that of the learned world." So say we of these venerable books. Preserve them as they have been handed down to us, by men whom we know to have been careful and scrupulous, even to superstition. Lay no violent hands upon them. Let them stand up in their genuine condition and native dress, and tell their tale to posterity, as they have to many generations passed away. And if they affirm, as it seems to us they do,—that Moses was not their author, nor any one else who lived in the age of Moses, or for many generations subsequently to his day, surely this is an additional argument for their integrity and truthfulness. Let them bear their testimony, and let it be accepted for what it is really worth. It may not be the testimony of a historian contemporaneous with the events which he describes; perhaps it may have proceeded from one who was not even well informed on many of them. But at least he comes to us in no disguise; and we may fairly presume that he will utter nothing but what he believes to be the truth. And after every allowance has been made for the mistakes into which he may have fallen, arising from traditionary information and defective records, there is at least one point on which we conceive he was not mistaken; namely, that God visited his people in Egypt, brought them out of it with a strong hand and with a stretched out arm; that "he gave unto Israel a law and unto the house of Jacob a testimony;" making known "his ways unto Moses and his acts to the children of Israel."

To the advocates of the inspiration-theory such discussions may produce a sinking of the heart and a horror of darkness. They will look upon the opinions we have expressed as reckless, impious, and sacrilegious. Alas! they know not in what a patient, earnest, thoughtful spirit the inquiries have been prosecuted which led to

these results; how entirely they were opposed both to present interests and past convictions; how fearful was the load of doubt and despair which they removed from the mind; how lovely the light which they shed on the pathway of God's providence; and how sweet the peace which, when finally attained, they diffused around the soul. Surely there is no Christian man but must feel the deepest thankfulness when he discovers how little ground there is for believing that the rite of circumcision—that outrage upon nature—was ordained of Him who gave us our frame; that precepts which legalise lust and oppression proceeded from the mouth of a pure and benevolent Deity; or that commands which enjoin wars of extermination to be prosecuted from age to age, were dictated by the God and Father of All!

We have not deemed it necessary to enter upon a laboured refutation of the theory of inspiration laid down by Mr. Burgon, in the sentences quoted at the beginning of this article. To many readers it will require no refutation: to state it is to disprove it sufficiently. There may be others who might admit an inspiration such as that writer contends for, in reference to a work which really proceeded from the pen of Moses. But if the considerations which we have advanced have any weight, such notions will probably disappear at once: for few or none will be disposed to attribute such a tremendous authority as Mr. Burgon asserts, to the composition of a historian of whose name, character, age, and sources of information we know absolutely nothing; of whom, in fact, we know no more than his own work indicates: namely, that he was a Jew, and that he wrote many centuries after the events which he attempted to describe.

We have scarcely touched upon the subject matter of Bishop Colenso's book. It follows an entirely different line of argument from that above sketched out, but reaches the same conclusion, and well deserves a thoughtful and discriminating perusal.

J. SCOTT PORTER.

THE LATE REV. FLETCHER BLAKELY AND THE REV.
DR. MONTGOMERY,

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CHRISTIAN UNITARIAN.

DEAR SIR,—No one can be justly blamed for “honest doubt,” or even for absolute unbelief, on religious subjects, because no man can control his thoughts or regulate his opinions by the simple determinations of his own will. Acting upon this rational principle, I *have* lived, and still *continue* to live, on terms of cordial intercourse with some who are not able to recognize, as I do, the Divine origin and authority of the Gospel dispensation. I value them as honourable and worthy men who make no pretences *to be* what they are *not*—who do not treacherously become *propagandists* of infidelity under hollow pretexts of being the special advocates of liberty of conscience—and who do not audaciously presume to regulate the concerns of *Christian Churches*, with the covert design of gradually destroying the authority of *Christian Truth*. Neither growing scepticism nor open unbelief is, therefore, so much the crying evil of the age in which we live, as the shameless dishonesty of some men who continue to enjoy the honours and emoluments of Churches, whilst devoting all their energies to undermine their very foundations, and the cool effrontery of others, who, possessing neither intellectual nor moral claims to social respect, venture, nevertheless, in furtherance of their unworthy designs, to slander men whose entire lives have been devoted to the earnest, efficient, and *unchanged* support of the holy cause of Civil and Religious Liberty.

In fact, the Jesuit maxim, that “the end will justify the means,” has been completely adopted in our own times and neighbourhood, by certain individuals, lay and clerical, who have unblushingly resorted to the old device of injuring a good cause which they hate, by unscrupulously misrepresenting its principles and maligning its advocates. It is no great stretch of vanity to say, that, during the last thirty-six years, *I* have been no inactive supporter of Christian Liberty, based upon Christian Truth; and, until German Rationalism made its stealthy way into some of our Churches, a few years ago, my

name was neither unknown nor unhonoured. When, therefore, a plan was deliberately formed to undermine the Christian foundation of the Remonstrant Synod, by opening its pulpits to the possible entrance of Deism, or even of Atheism, it was an essential preliminary to the execution of the unholy purpose, that *my* reputation and influence should be destroyed—that my genuine *conservative* Christianity should be put out of the way. But how was this amiable purpose to be carried out! *Truth* could not effect it; for truth would have shown me to have been uniformly, consistently, unchangeably, what I was in the palmy years of 1827, 1828, 1829, and 1830, when I was permitted to fight at the head of a small but glorious army of confessors; when my head devised and my hand wrote the Twelve Constitution Principles of our Church—Principles from which neither myself nor my Synod have ever swerved the breadth of a hair, save in finally *striking off* the only link of fetters which we had, unhappily, carried with us from the General Synod of Ulster. *Fraud and falsehood* were therefore required to poison the minds of the unsuspecting laity; and, consequently, I was foully, and audaciously, and falsely accused of having deserted the standard of Liberty—of having forged *new* fetters instead of unbinding the last remnant of the *old*—and of desiring to trample upon the rights of the people in the free choice of their ministers! Had I been accused of murder, the charge would not have been more untrue; but its *very* audacity secured it a considerable amount of acceptance; for simple-minded laymen, creditably jealous of their privileges, could hardly believe that men wearing black coats, and preaching from pulpits, could have reiterated, on a thousand occasions, statements and charges as unsubstantial as “the baseless fabric of a vision!” A dozen volumes of wilful, truthless malignity could be selected from the pages of pamphlets and sermons—from the columns of the *Irish Non-Subscriber*, the *London Inquirer*, and the *Manchester Herald*—from frothy Addresses and Replies—from wicked speeches and correspondence! No poor mortal was ever before subjected to such an ink-shed of matter as black as the ink itself. I was branded with such epithets as “renegade, traitor, falsifier, tyrant,

persecutor, inquisitor, Pope," and others equally courteous; but, as children say, "I kept never minding." I did not condescend to refute a single slander. I allowed the storm to rave itself to rest. I calculated that the *people*, in due time, would do justice to their tried friend of almost forty years, and I was not disappointed. The clouds began gradually to clear away; the sun of truth shone upon my principles and actions; and the old fictions were rapidly losing their force. Two or three congregations, however, were still to be cajoled and tricked into leaving the Remonstrant Synod, "to mortify Dr. Montgomery," as it is said a very amiable divine gently expressed it. But the *old* cries would not rouse the people—especially the shrewd, hard-headed people of Moneyrea.

Some new invention, therefore, was required; and, of course, it was soon found. Previously, I had only been misrepresented, in the grossest terms, as a renegade from Liberty, but that was little more than an error or a fault; my *humanity* had not been impeached; my temper and spirit, as a *vengeful and implacable wretch*, had not been paraded before the world. That crowning task remained to be executed; and it was speedily performed with a deadly ingenuity and dexterity.

My old friend, Fletcher Blakely, had been long and justly valued as a kind-hearted, worthy man, not only by his own good people, but likewise by all neighbouring congregations. Any indignity or disrespect, therefore, shown to *him*, was sure to awaken general and deep indignation against the wrong-doer. Accordingly, a story was invented, that I had frequently stood in the way of his interests, and acted unkindly towards him during his public life—that, in particular, I had refused to visit him in his last illness, and before his removal to England—and, finally, that I had behaved thus unworthily and implacably, "solely because Mr. Blakely had subscribed to a testimonial in honour of the Rev. David Maginnis!" This tale was rapidly circulated over Ulster; and in Moneyrea particularly, three modest and amiable personages took it up, carried it into every house, declaimed about it on highways, and speedily prepared the congregation to leave the Synod, of which so vengeful and un-Christian a monster as Dr. Montgomery was a member.

All this, however, was not sufficient to satisfy the deep malignity of my detractors. The calumny, though widely circulated, had not spread beyond Ireland, and it was necessary to hold me up to execration in England, Scotland, and America. This pleasant duty was admirably performed by *The Non-Subscriber*, who, of course, enlarged and embellished the tale, *invented* "an alienation" between Mr. Blakely and me which never existed, assigned the origin of my dissatisfaction to his subscription to the Maginnis Testimonial, and declared that I had said (affecting to quote my very words), "This last offence I fear I can never forgive!" The amiable writer then denounces my conduct as "*a crime*," and holds me up to the world as utterly implacable and heartless!

Now, Mr. Editor, I freely admit the great ingenuity and perfect success of this tale. It has done its work for the present, and for the present only, I firmly believe; for I am convinced, when the respectable and independent people of Moneyrea discover that they were duped and made tools of by two or three persons who have no social or other claims to *rule* them, they will yet "return to their first love."

In another point of view, also, the concoction was ingenious; for as it is an invidious task to speak unpalatable truth even of the absent living, and still more so of the absent dead, it was doubtless calculated that I would tamely lie under *any* amount of reproach rather than enter upon the painful and ungracious duty of referring, even in self-defence, to my private relations with a departed friend. I freely admit the sacredness of the *grave*; but unworthy men must not be permitted to use it to the dishonour of *the living*, and, through that dishonour, to the injury of Christian truth. I owe it to *myself*, to vindicate my fair fame; I owe it to my *family*, to transmit to them, if I justly can, the inheritance of an untarnished character; and I owe it to my *Church*, to prevent its name from being dishonoured and its influence lessened by unjust imputations cast upon one so long and so intimately identified with its principles and its history. Happily, the remarkable narrative which I am *compelled* to give, solely in self-defence, will vindicate *myself* without *morally* inculcating a departed brother; and should some

of the details be rather disagreeable to his surviving relatives, they must blame themselves and their injudicious friends for *forcing* me to publish statements which I should much rather have buried in oblivion. The narrative which I am about to give is absolutely necessary, however, to a clear understanding of the origin and validity of the accusations so bitterly and unscrupulously preferred against me.

Fletcher Blakely and myself became acquainted with each other in the year 1809 ; and, having been ordained just one week before him, I was his senior minister, though by some seven years the younger man. Whilst he is now perpetually held up by his crafty eulogists as “the *consistent* friend of Religious Liberty,” he had *twice* subscribed the General Synod’s *Formula*, recognizing the Westminster Confession of Faith ; but I soon discovered that he went far beyond me in his Unitarianism, being a decided Humanitarian. This discrepancy of views, however (though I have been accused of hating Humanitarians), never interfered with our mutual regard, for I had always reason to look upon him as a sincere believer in the Divine mission of Christ. Accordingly, no man rejoiced more heartily than kind Fletcher Blakely in my appointment, forty-five years ago, to a Head Mastership in the Belfast Royal Institution—an appointment which, in after years, resulted in somewhat peculiar relations between us. Having hearts much larger than our means, and worldly prudence much smaller than the interests of our families demanded, we were both, in the early years of our ministry, exceedingly poor men ; and, consequently, one of the greatest enjoyments arising from my more prosperous lot was the power of lending pecuniary assistance to my less fortunate friend. To such an extent did this accommodation proceed, that, during some sixteen years (and frequently, as he well knew, to my own inconvenience), he was often in my debt *more*, but never *less*, than £200, as I have documents to prove.

In this condition, our relations continued until the year 1835, when, finding that his affairs were in no degree improved, I privately set on foot, and personally carried out, at much expense and labour, a subscription for his benefit, which eventually reached the large amount

of £213—a reward to which he was well entitled, for eight years' honest and zealous labours in the cause of Religious Liberty. Early in the year 1836, I released him from all *legal* obligations to me, although he was still upwards of £50 my debtor.

Thus closed the several scenes of the first act of my *unkind and ungenerous* treatment of worthy Fletcher Blakely; and the next act opens with a view of my conduct towards his son David—an excellent youth, of whose talents, principles, and character any father might have been justly proud. He entered College at a very early age; and whilst he was little more than a boy, I took him into my school as a day assistant, at my *highest* ushers' salary, and allowed him full time to attend all his classes. So well did he discharge his duties, that I very soon made him my resident assistant, at full pay—his College studies proceeding all the while! And thus his education, instead of being a burthen to the father, actually enriched the son. Nor was this all; for, duly estimating David Blakely's attainments and fidelity, I proceeded to Dublin, at my own cost, and secured him an appointment under the Board of National Education, in whose service he conducted himself so well that he speedily became one of their most valued Inspectors. For these and other services it will soon appear, in the succeeding acts of this strange life-drama, I had my due reward!

In 1832, I was happily enabled to secure £50 a year for the clerk of the Remonstrant Synod, which the excellent William Porter properly enjoyed until the close of his honourable life, in the year 1844. As the salary had been obtained solely by my own interest, unknown to the Synod, and as I had taught their theological students gratuitously during fifteen years, the late William Glendy and others urged me to become a candidate for the clerkship; and, had I done so, I am confident that I would have been unanimously appointed; but, in my usual spirit of self-sacrifice for the advantage of others, I proposed the benevolent plan of giving the clerkship in succession to my younger and poorer brethren, for three years. At the same time, I sent an earnest lithographed circular to all our ministers, entreating them, although

he enjoyed a first-class Bounty, to grant the office for *four years* to Mr. Blakely, in recognition and recompense of his zeal and services. My recommendation was unanimously adopted; and thus, though I have been ungenerously sneered at, "as selfish and self-seeking," I rejected £50 a year for life, to put £200 into the pocket of Fletcher Blakely, and £150 in succession into the pockets of others, in all coming time!

Moreover, as I have his own letters to prove, during eighteen long years (*i.e.* from 1836 to 1854), knowing my poor friend's straitened circumstances, I never once asked him to pay one penny of the sum which he owed me—nor did *he* ever hint at his indebtedness, although he received bounty through my hands every quarter. Eventually, I received the principal sum at sundry payments; but even of *simple* interest for eighteen years, I have never received one farthing; and, were strict calculations applied to our pecuniary transactions for more than thirty-five years, I am convinced it would appear that my old friend died in my debt upwards of £100.

For all the preceding statements, unwisely forced from me by others in self-defence, I have written vouchers; and I leave it to the world to judge, whether any private man, in my station, ever did more for the honour and well-being of another than I did for the honour and happiness of Fletcher Blakely; and whether, of all men that ever lived, *his* name is not the very last which should have been employed to cast discredit upon *mine*!

Distressing as my enforced task has hitherto been, I must yet enter upon details still more painful; because they will exhibit a man naturally amiable, unselfish, honourable, and worthy, reduced in his old age, by bodily and mental infirmity, to be a mere instrument in the hands of unscrupulous men, for effecting purposes which, in the vigour of life, his manly spirit would have spurned! Nothing shall induce me to say an ungenerous word of one of the purest-minded and kindest-hearted men that ever lived. The acts which I must expose were not, in any moral sense, *his own*. He was cajoled, duped, blind-led; and the very artlessness of his own nature prevented his suspecting deceit in others, who dexterously used his almost single failing, *vanity*, as a fulcrum on

which to rest their lever for moving and directing his entire thoughts, feelings, and actions, to suit their own purposes. He was constantly told that his position in our Church was not sufficiently commanding—that he had never been estimated in proportion to his deserts and services—that whilst he was, in fact, “the brains-carrier of the Synod,” Dr. Montgomery overshadowed him without any just right to a higher position in public consideration. When, by this device, his declining faculties were rendered morbid and irritable, a few dexterous falsehoods completed the work; and he began to rail against me as if I had been his deadliest foe, instead of his earliest, truest, and most valuable friend! His house, of course, became the rendezvous of all the young aspirants who forgot my services, or meanly envied my position in the Church and in the world; and, on one occasion, his favourite Elder (who had been invited to take tea), after listening for a long time to virulent abuse of me in Mr. Blakely’s presence, rose and called upon his wife to go home. “What!” exclaimed my old friend, “will you not wait for tea, David?” “No,” replied the worthy man, “I thought it was for that purpose I was invited; but I now find it was only to hear Dr. Montgomery abused!”

The virtual derangement of his moral faculties, created by the arts and agents referred to, soon afterwards culminated in his passing me, unsaluted and with a scowl of indignation, upon the streets of Belfast; and, sadder still, his son David, who had been to me and my wife as the child of our own home, followed his deluded father’s unhappy example, passed me with scorn, and knew me no more! Has it not been well said, “That truth is frequently stranger than fiction.”

Thus defamed and insulted by those whom I had so essentially served to my own serious loss, and who were still under large obligations to me, I did not of course obtrude myself on Mr. Blakely’s presence, when he became indisposed, some four years ago; but when the kind old man “came to himself,” on his sick-bed, and sent a request that I would visit him, did I show myself stern and implacable? No; the very next day I took my wife and daughter, for whom he had always professed

extraordinary regard, and we entered his house with feelings as warm and kind as ever animated human hearts.

The scene was deeply affecting: my poor old friend wept aloud: he held my hand and bathed it with his tears—he asked my pardon for the injustice which he had been led to do me—he reprobated the conduct of certain young ministers who had entered into and profited by our labours, but forgot our services—and, in every term of affection which a kindly heart could employ, he besought me to forget the *recent* past, and to dwell only on the pleasant scenes and memories of earlier years! I, too, was melted—my expressions were neither cold nor niggardly—our hearts and our spirits were one again, and we were truly happy! He then said he was about to put the reality of my forgiveness to the test. “No man,” said he, “could preach my funeral sermon but yourself. Will you *do* it; and write the sermon so that it may be published?” I consented to do so, if I survived him: and the remainder of our long visit was all sunshine and satisfaction. We parted as assured friends, whom nothing earthly could estrange or sever—yet on this earth never to meet again!

How frail and wretched a creature is man! How feeble are his best resolves! The very individual who had wept over my hand in penitence, who had vowed eternal friendship, lent his venerable name a few months afterwards to hold me up to the world in the hateful character of “*a false accuser and persecutor*,” and, whilst largely in my debt, liberally gave money to sustain his unfounded charges! It is wholly untrue that I was offended, as has been alleged, “because he subscribed to a testimonial to David Maginnis”—though, considering the perseverance with which that miserable man had maligned my aged brother’s best friend and benefactor, that act would of itself have been abundantly offensive. Nevertheless, I should have passed it over without resentment, as merely a sad evidence of human weakness; but when he used these shocking words, “I subscribe to express my strong disapprobation of those who have brought forward unfounded accusations against a faithful Christian minister,” it was not a testimonial in honour of

David Maginnis, for whom, personally, no man cared a straw, but a foul calumny against Henry Montgomery ! It does not mend the matter one whit to say that, possibly, he had not seen the lying heading of the Subscription List ; for I gave him to understand the express ground of my not going to see him ; and yet he never intimated directly, or indirectly, that he had subscribed in ignorance—an intimation which would at once have carried me to Moneyrea. The simple truth is, “the evil spirits” regained their dominion after I had left him ; he was no longer his own master, but a mere slave and instrument in the foul hands that moulded him to their purposes ; and, consequently, although *chagrined* at his weakness and folly, I was not *indignant* at the act of an unhappy man, who, owing to the decay of his mental faculties, had evidently lost all self-control. I put this forward, mercifully, as what I consider a valid plea for conduct which, on any other ground, would imprint the indelible stain of injustice and ingratitude upon his memory.

I come now to my “*Great Crime*,” which has been echoed and re-echoed over the world, viz., my “Unchristian Implacability,” over which enemies have chuckled and declaimed, and with regard to which even generous friends have only been able to accord me the charity of their silence ! Happily, the *Non-Subscriber* has reduced the accusation to a definite form, and thereby rendered me a service, for the first time during its vile existence, by enabling me, summarily and effectually, to strangle the viper. Here are the writer’s words—

“Owing to the adoption, a few years ago, of a creed by the Remonstrant Synod, which was strongly condemned by Mr. Blakely, an estrangement had arisen between him and Dr. Montgomery ; and the old man, with that generous sentiment of forgiveness which had, throughout a long life, been a leading characteristic of his nature, sent, on the eve of his departure, a special request to the Dr. to come and be reconciled before he left the spot to which he knew he should never more return. What was the answer ? ‘That,’ said the Dr., ‘is a request which will require consideration : I have forgiven Fletcher Blakely many things, but his last offence I fear I never can forgive’ !! The result was, that Dr. Montgomery did not go to be reconciled ; and the offence which could not be forgiven was, that the venerable champion of religious freedom had subscribed to the testimonial presented to the Rev. David Maginnis !!”

A fiction so baseless in *all* its parts, as that just quoted, was, I firmly believe, never before penned by mortal man. From beginning to end, like all other charges from the same source, *it is absolutely untrue!* The Remonstrant Synod never adopted a *Creed*, at any time subsequently to its formation in the year 1830. On the contrary, as I have already shown, it annulled, in the year 1857, the power of *enforcing* a Creed which existed in the 10th Section of its Original Constitution, and substituted, in the interests of *Christian Liberty*, three plain Questions, to be answered by candidates for License and Ordination—questions involving not even the shadow of a human creed, but simply a recognition of Christianity at large, as possessing Divine authority, and leaving *peculiar* views of the Gospel Dispensation solely to the private judgment of individuals. With regard to the duty and necessity of *questioning*, Mr. Blakely and I were perfectly agreed, and only differed concerning the *number* of questions—he contending, as our Records show, that only *two* questions should be asked, whilst I successfully maintained that we ought to ask *three*—the question which he desired to omit being, very strangely, one that recognized the existence of God “as Creator and Governor of the universe!” On this subject, however, there never was one moment’s “estrangement” between us, and we were just as cordial friends after it was settled as we had ever previously been.

It is next alleged, that “the good old man, on the eve of his departure for England, with a generous sentiment of forgiveness, sent a special request that I would go to be reconciled to him, before he left the spot to which he knew he should never more return.” Just think of Fletcher Blakely “generously *forgiving*” Henry Montgomery! For what offence did he so magnanimously grant me pardon? For “the crime,” I presume, of having rendered important and life-long services to him and to his children; and that, too, at the cost of serious inconvenience to myself, and large eventual loss to my own family! If unceasing generosity and kindness require to be forgiven, my old friend had *much* to pardon in my conduct; but, I solemnly declare that, in thought, word, or deed, I never injured him since I was born. Even

when he and his poor son had been led, by malignant influences and misrepresentations, to utter what was entirely untrue with regard to me—to revile me, in no measured terms—to make his house the favourite rendezvous of my defamers—to pass me on the streets with gross insult—even under all these provocations I boldly defy any man to show that I *ever* uttered an unkind expression with regard to one whom I truly compassionated and pardoned as the unsuspecting instrument of men less honest and more unscrupulous than himself!

That “a special request” *was* sent to me is quite true, and there was a special messenger, Mr. David Orr, Mr. Blakely’s favourite Elder—than whom a more worthy and truthful man does not live. With his full knowledge and concurrence, I shall now state the request, and the *only* request, which he called upon me to make—a request originating in very painful circumstances connected with my poor friend’s removal to England—circumstances which I am not at liberty to mention. The request in itself, irrespective of the reasons on which it was founded, was exceedingly simple, viz., that, as agent for the Royal Bounty, I should make the quarterly payments to Mr. Orr instead of to Mr. Blakely himself. I easily satisfied Mr. Orr that, according to my instructions from Government, I could not do that; and thus ended the entire business of “the special request;” after which we had some conversation about Mr. Blakely’s health, and the strange course which, under certain influences, he had of late years been induced to pursue, in relation to our Church and myself. This opened the way to my saying that I had never blamed the poor old man—that, owing to the great decline of his mental and bodily energies, he had become an instrument in the hands of others—and that, notwithstanding all he had been led to say and do I still cherished the most friendly sentiments towards him as an honest, kind-hearted man. Mr. Orr, on hearing me thus express myself, then said, “I think that I may *now* tell you what Mr. Blakely said, just before I left him. ‘Tell the Doctor,’ said he, ‘that if he can find time to pay me a visit before I go, I will be glad to see him.’ Knowing as I do,” continued Mr. Orr, “how you have been treated, I could hardly expect you to come,

but I have told you what he said." I instantly replied—"There is no part of my moral constitution for which I am so thankful to God as my ability and willingness to forgive injuries; and besides, as a Christian, I am bound to forgive my offending brother, 'not seven times only, but until seventy times seven.' In this matter, therefore, I hesitate for a moment only upon one ground—the fear that he might renew his application concerning his funeral sermon—a task which I must decline." I stated, however, my strong inclination to bid him farewell, and inquired when he was to leave. Mr. Orr replied, "On Wednesday next, he believed"—our conversation occurring on Friday afternoon. I then said, you know that a minister cannot leave home on Saturday; on Monday I must attend an important meeting of Governors at the Asylum, and on Tuesday I have engaged to go to Lisburn, in the hope of serving an unfortunate farmer. Tell my old friend, however, that *if possible* I shall see him before he goes; and if not, assure him of my continued regard and best wishes for his happiness. Some urgent business, which I do not at the present moment recollect, prevented my going on Wednesday, as I purposed doing; and thus I saw my worthy old friend no more.

To what I have written, Mr. Orr will bear his unquestionable testimony, and the world will see that all the pathetic twaddle of *The Non-Subscriber* about "the generous old man sending a special request for reconciliation," and my saying that, for the offence of contributing to the Maginnis Testimonial, "I could never forgive him," has no other source than the impure mind which invented it. How far I am justly chargeable, in this matter, with cherishing a vengeful and unchristian spirit, the facts which I have stated will abundantly show; and I firmly believe that the very men who have sought to injure a good cause by maligning its advocate, are convinced in their souls that I never cherished, nay, that I am utterly incapable of cherishing, the ungenerous and implacable feelings which they have so unworthily imputed to me.

I have now finished the most painful task of a long life, forced upon me in self-vindication, by reckless men; and I am quite prepared for the pathetic wail which will

be raised about "the memories of the honoured dead, and the sacredness of the grave!" The defamers of the *living* should have thought of these things before they provoked a righteous and necessary retribution; and I warn them, that, if farther maligned, my bow is not broken, nor is my quiver exhausted. I scorn all mawkish cant about "meekness and forbearance" with wilful and persevering wrong-doers. "Generations of vipers" were denounced of old, and it cannot be unchristian to rebuke them now.

I am, dear Sir, yours sincerely,

H. MONTGOMERY.

DUNMURRY GLEBE, Nov. 21, 1862.

UNITARIANISM AND PARKERISM.

[THE following letter, as its heading intimates, was sent some weeks ago to the *Unitarian Herald* for publication, but the Editors of that journal declined to insert it. They open their columns freely to the Rev. W. Binns and others who are doing their best to disseminate the opinions of Theodore Parker, but if a calm remonstrance be offered against the propagation, in connexion with Unitarianism, of views which strike at the root of Divine revelation, it cannot be published. We regret that the writer has not given his name, as, clear and forcible though the letter is, it would have possessed still more weight if it had borne the signature of one who for many years has been distinguished, and in several Unitarian Societies more than once commended, for his earnest, persevering, and successful efforts to spread Christian Unitarianism in the sister kingdom.—ED. CH. UN.]

TO THE EDITORS OF THE UNITARIAN HERALD.

SIRS,—I was recently much delighted to observe that the British and Foreign Unitarian Association had resolved to assist in promoting missionary labours in some parts of England, and in Scotland. Soon after, I was no less pained to find that, within our denomination, weapons were being forged which the "orthodox" would not fail to wield against us, as soon as our missionaries should appear in their several districts. In No. 69 of the *Herald*, there appeared a letter under the hand of the Rev. William Binns, intimating that a long list of well-known ministers and laymen, who are Unitarians solely or chiefly through the influence of Theodore Parker, might easily be made out,—that some of those gentlemen think they could not more appropriately help their brethren out of

darkness into light than by issuing a cheap edition of Parker's works,—and that in the labour of editing such edition, he (Mr. Binns) should receive the general co-operation of the Rev. John Wright. In last week's *Herald* there is a letter on the same subject by the same writer. Now, can anything be imagined better calculated to suit the purpose of those who would raise against us the cry of scepticism and unbelief? Let our missionaries who go forth to proclaim our views attempt to refute the charges that will certainly be raised, and will not the *Unitarian Herald* be held up exultingly in reply, and with reason? But those missionaries may possibly be selected from amongst the "Unitarians born and the Unitarians converted," who, according to Mr. Binns, so warmly sympathize with Parker's views. If so, I trust it will not be expected that those who have derived their Unitarianism from the New Testament will give countenance or aid to such missions. I can only speak for myself. For many years I have laboured, according to my humble ability, to promote the faith in Christ as held by Unitarians, and to defend it against orthodox misrepresentation. The scene of my labours is one of the places marked out for future missionary work; and should necessity arise for defending that faith which I hold dearer than life, against Parkerism taught under the Unitarian name, I will not shrink from the task. It seems high time that those who value the Christian Scriptures as a record of Divine revelation should see to their position and speak out plainly.

3rd Nov., 1862.

A LAY PREACHER.

REV. S. C. NELSON AND THE "UNSPOKEN SPEECH."

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CHRISTIAN UNITARIAN.

SIR,—Will you grant me space to say with what deep regret and heartfelt pain I have read what has appeared in the *Christian Unitarian*, respecting the now somewhat celebrated "*Unspoken Speech*?" I have seldom, if ever, met with, or even heard of, a more barefaced and impudent attempt to deceive the Unitarian public; and I would fondly hope, that the minister to whom the speech was ascribed, had no hand in manufacturing the *forged* production. We know that men are often led, by their desire to serve a party, to do what they would spurn individually; but seldom, indeed, will the most reckless partisans venture deliberately to write, and deliberately to send to a newspaper for publication, what they *know to be untrue*. In my opinion, Sir, this is a most serious matter, and if the Rev. S. C. Nelson has any regard for his own fair reputation, he will, if he can truthfully do so, deny, in the most unqualified terms, that he had any hand in the preparation of that *forged* composition. This is, I repeat, a most serious question; it is a question of *common truthfulness*. Whoever sent the "*Unspoken Speech*" to the *Inquirer*, did, undeniably, wilfully attempt to deceive the English Unitarians by falsehood. Whoever

wrote out that "*Unspoken Speech*" as the speech which was made by Mr. Nelson at the meeting of the Non-Subscribing Association, at Comber, is an untruthful man, and ought to be held up before the public in his true character. Whatever may be the opinion of our English brethren as to the points which have for some time been distracting our Irish Churches, I should think not one individual could be found who would not condemn, in the strongest terms, this most reprehensible and most contemptible conduct.

TRUTH.

December 19, 1862.

INTELLIGENCE.

CARRICKFERGUS CONGREGATION.

As many of our readers may be anxious to learn the proceedings that have lately taken place in connexion with this Congregation, we subjoin a brief summary of the leading facts in relation to it. A full history of the case is, we understand, likely to be published, with which the present statement is not to be understood to interfere.

The first overt proceedings of the party who, claiming to represent the Congregation, have seceded from the Remonstrant Synod and joined the Presbytery of Antrim, took place on Sunday the 9th November. The Rev. Dr. Montgomery attended, on that day, by appointment of the Remonstrant Synod's Committee in charge of the Congregation of Carrickfergus, to preach, and to read several resolutions and notices designed to promote the well-being and harmony of the Congregation, and to explain the principles, laws, and usages of the Remonstrant Church. After the ordinary service, however, Mr. James Andrews and a few of his partisans rushed to the front of the pulpit, and, with violent clamour, prevented him from being heard. Mr. Andrews and his friends then produced a list of alleged voters, which was repeatedly denounced as fictitious and entirely invalid. He managed, however, by it, first, to have himself placed in the chair, and then to pass a Resolution misrepresenting the principles of the Remonstrant Synod, withdrawing from its jurisdiction, and appointing Commissioners to wait on the Presbytery of Antrim and apply to be taken under their care.

Pursuant to this resolution, a memorial, signed by five of the Commissioners so appointed, was presented by them to the Presbytery of Antrim, at a special meeting held for the purpose, at Rayara, on the 12th November. The memorial professed to come from the Commissioners of "the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Congregation of Carrickfergus," recited their alleged grievances, and prayed for the Congregation to be taken into connexion with the Presbytery of Antrim. The Presbytery, after spending, we believe, a considerable time in the discussion of the question, adjourned its further

consideration to another special meeting in Belfast, held on the 14th November, when the subject was resumed; and a letter from Dr. Montgomery having been read, a number of very extraordinary statements were made by Mr. Andrews and others, chiefly with the object of controverting Dr. Montgomery's letter, of showing that the majority of the Congregation favoured the memorial, and that the poll and all the proceedings of the 9th November had been regularly and legally conducted. Into these statements it is not our place further to enter, as we believe that sufficient refutation of them is likely to be given when the full history of the Carrickfergus case comes before the public. A protest was then read by the Moderator, signed, we believe, by twenty-three members of the Congregation, against the Antrim Presbytery consenting to the prayer of the memorial; notwithstanding which the Presbytery unanimously resolved to receive the Congregation into their connexion, the Moderator announcing their decision in a characteristic address, during which, as sufficient reply to Dr. Montgomery's letter, and the protest they had received, he took occasion to refer to "Adamson, and Jones, and Jenkins, and Logan, all," he said, "worthily representing their ancestors. Such sons of such fathers—could we doubt their assertions?"

On the same day a meeting of the Committee of the Remonstrant Synod in charge of the Carrickfergus Congregation was held in Belfast, at which were present a Trustee and several members of the Congregation, who fully confirmed Dr. Montgomery's statements that the proceedings of the "secession" party on the 9th November were entirely irregular and illegal, and that they believed that a considerable majority of the *bona fide* seatholders, and members of the Congregation legally entitled to vote, were entirely opposed to separation from the Remonstrant Synod, but had been overborne by the violence of the opposite faction and their leaders.

Under these circumstances but one duty remained for the Committee—to watch over and protect the rights and properties of the Congregation entrusted to their care, and to vindicate at all risks the outraged liberty of their people to the free and constitutional expression of their wishes. It was therefore determined to send a minister on the following Sunday to preach at Carrickfergus, and assert the rights of the Synod to the possession of the pulpit. The Rev. John A. Crozier, Clerk of Synod, was commissioned for this purpose. Mr. Crozier accordingly repaired, on the following Sunday, to the meeting-house in Carrickfergus, a few minutes before twelve o'clock, but found the pulpit occupied by the Rev. William Hall, of Greyabbey (at present in connexion with the Presbytery of Antrim), and guarded by Mr. James Logan. Mr. Crozier immediately ascended the pulpit stairs, declared his commission, and demanded from Mr. Hall possession of the pulpit in the name of the Remonstrant Synod; and on Mr. Hall twice refusing to leave it, he called on Mr. Logan, as a Trustee of the Congregation, to aid him in obtaining it. Mr. Logan not only refused to do so, but declared he would prevent Mr. Crozier entering it by all means, using force if necessary. In this he was joined by Mr. James Andrews, both these gentlemen placing themselves as personal obstructions in Mr. Crozier's way. On the other hand, he was publicly authorised by

Mr. Kane, one of the Trustees who was present, to take immediate possession and fulfil his duty; while, on his calling on the Congregation to signify *their* wishes, a large and unquestionable majority instantly cried out to him to "take the pulpit." Having several times attempted to enter it, and seeing that any further persistence on his part, from the natural excitement of the Congregation thus violently deprived of their rights, would only lead to unseemly disturbance, Mr Crozier withdrew, after warning the several parties that they would be held answerable for thus obstructing him in the discharge of his duty. Solemn protests were subsequently read in the meeting-house on the part of the Remonstrant members of the Congregation and of Mr. Kane, a Trustee.

Next day (Monday the 17th) an adjourned meeting of the Synodical Committee was held in Belfast, when, having received Mr. Crozier's report, peaceful and equitable overtures towards a settlement of the existing differences were resolved on, for transmission to the Presbytery of Antrim, and through them to their party in the Congregation.

The substance of these overtures was, that in order to prevent the scandal of unfriendly conflicts between religious bodies, and to avoid unprofitable and expensive contests in courts of law, a correct poll list of the voters of the Congregation on November 1st, be made out according to the regulations of the Remonstrant Synod, with which, at that date, the Congregation was connected; that from this list the mind of the people shall be taken on the question of remaining with the Synod or seceding from it; and that the majority, whatever the decision may be, shall hold undisturbed possession of the Congregational property, paying to the minority such equitable compensation as three arbitrators, duly appointed, shall consider fair. It was further proposed, that in order to secure the rights of those who desire to join the Presbytery of Antrim, three members of that Body should attend at the making out of the poll list, and afterwards in polling the Congregation. It was also added, that, in the event of this reasonable proposition being declined, the Synod's Committee were willing that, in order to ascertain the legal rights of the parties, the comparatively inexpensive plan be adopted of an Arbitration, by three Chancery lawyers, the party against whom the award shall be given to pay the costs of the Arbitration.

In the event of the overtures being accepted, it was also proposed, that to prevent the shame and sin of possible collisions, by word or act, in a house of worship, neither party shall occupy the meeting-house till a decision be arrived at, or else that they shall, by arrangement, use it at different hours.

To these overtures a reply was afterwards received by the Committee from the Presbytery of Antrim and their supporters, entirely declining to accept their just and conciliatory proposals. The Committee therefore determined to continue the strict assertion of their rights, and the Rev. R. Campbell was appointed to go to Carrickfergus on the next Sunday, when, we understand, a scene similar to that of the former Sunday took place. Mr. Campbell having addressed the Congregation, and made the necessary claims and protest, left the place.

Meanwhile deputations both from Presbytery and Committee had visited Carrickfergus to prepare their respective poll lists of the Congregation. The poll list made out by the Synod's committee up to the 1st November, 1862, shews a decided Remonstrant majority of the actual members of the Congregation. On a poll list made out by the Presbytery of Antrim, a poll was subsequently taken by them for Mr. William Smyth, son of the Rev. T. Smyth of Baloo. A call was drawn up and presented to him, which he accepted; and he was, on December 17th, ordained as minister of the Congregation of Carrickfergus in connexion with the Presbytery of Antrim!

The Rev. R. Cleland, a licentiate of the Bangor Presbytery, has received and accepted a unanimous call from the Remonstrant majority of the Carrickfergus Congregation. The call was signed by *sixty-two* seatholders. Arrangements have been made for Mr. Cleland's ordination.

A gentleman who was present on Sunday, the 21st December, when the Rev. J. A. Crozier attended to take a poll for Mr. Cleland, has informed us that the Rev. W. J. Smyth and the Rev. D. Gordon jointly occupied the pulpit on that day, and preached *alternately* and apparently against time, so as to allow no opportunity for Mr. Crozier to speak; and when he availed himself of a pause in the services, and proceeded to discharge the duty assigned to him, the reverend preachers called on a body of police that was in attendance to expel Mr. Crozier and the Remonstrants as "brawlers" and disturbers of *their religious services*! It was to no purpose, however, that they thus sought the aid of the civil power, and a call was regularly drawn up for Mr. Cleland.

CONGREGATIONAL ENTERTAINMENT AT BALLYCARRY.

The manse in connexion with the Old Presbyterian Meeting-house, Ballycarry, having become much dilapidated, the Congregation applied to Dr. Montgomery to bring the matter before Mr. Ker, the generous landlord of Broadisland, and to endeavour to procure assistance from him in rebuilding it. On Sunday, December 7th, Dr. Montgomery came to Ballycarry to preach, and to report the result of his application. He delivered a very eloquent and impressive discourse, and at the conclusion of divine service he stated that his mission had been most successful, and that Mr. Ker had promised the munificent subscription of £70 to aid them in rebuilding the manse. This intelligence was most gratifying to the Congregation, and confirmed the impression long entertained by the Broadisland tenantry of their landlord's benevolence and generosity. Dr. Montgomery at the same time handed in £5 as his own subscription towards the manse. The young men of the Congregation, taking advantage of Dr. Montgomery's visit, and to welcome his presence amongst them, gave a soiree on the evening of Monday, the 8th December, and, notwithstanding the unfavourable state of the weather, a large and respectable company, composed of various denominations, sat down to tea.

The proceedings of the evening were opened by prayer, by the Rev. M. Getty, minister of the Congregation, and the assembly

having partaken to satisfaction of the things provided for them, the chair was taken by Mr. Getty. The Chairman, after briefly adverting to the object of the meeting, introduced the first speaker of the evening, the Rev. Classon Porter, of Larne, who gave an interesting outline of the history of the Old Congregation of Ballycarry.

The CHAIRMAN next gave "Civil and Religious Liberty," and appropriately connected with that sentiment the name of one of its most faithful and consistent advocates, the Rev. Dr. Montgomery.

Dr. MONTGOMERY, who on rising was warmly received, proceeded to define the meaning of liberty, and after having distinctly placed before his audience the great advantages which we in these lands enjoy in connexion with our civil rights and privileges, went on to treat of religious liberty. In this department of his subject, the eloquent speaker specially dwelt upon a spurious kind of liberty which in the present day was rising up in connexion with religion, when men calling themselves Christians, and enjoying Christian emoluments, took advantage of their position, and under the plea of religious liberty, undermined the very foundations of Christianity itself. Such persons, he contended, were not friends, but enemies, to religious liberty.

The Rev. JAMES CALLWELL, Glenarm, was next called on to address the meeting, and spoke on "The obstacles in the way of the Christian ministry." Mr. Callwell began by saying he had much pleasure in being present that evening. He saw before him the pulpit that was once occupied by one whose memory he could never cease to respect, the late Rev. W. Glendy. He knew well on what side, in discussions about church government, that able and eloquent Christian minister would have stood, had he lived till now. He never would have sanctioned the induction of any man into the ministry without asking him whether he acknowledged the divinity of Christ's mission, and whether he believed the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to contain a divine revelation—or without hearing from him a voluntary statement embodying affirmative answers to these questions. He showed clearly what he thought on these matters by saying on one occasion, in his own pithy style, that "it had always been the object of himself and other old ministers to uphold the Sacred Scriptures, but it seemed to be the object of the young men of the present day to set them aside." Mr. C. then spoke at some length on the subject assigned to him. Other sentiments were given and responded to, and Dr. Montgomery closed the proceedings by pronouncing the benediction.

LARNE AND KILWAUGHTER YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION.

On the evening of Tuesday, the 19th ult., the third anniversary of the above large and flourishing Society was held in the spacious school-room connected with the First Presbyterian Congregation of Larne, which was very tastefully decorated for the occasion with flowers, evergreens, and appropriate mottoes. No more tickets having been issued than the room could comfortably accommodate, about 300 persons of all ranks and religious persuasions sat down to tea, which was most bountifully furnished by the ladies presiding at the respective tea-tables. The entire arrangements of the enter-

tainment were most creditable to the young men—members of Committee—who acted as stewards, and contributed most materially to the enjoyment of the evening. Upon the platform were—Rev. Classon Porter, President of the Association; Hon. William Porter, Attorney-General, Cape of Good Hope; Rev. H. Montgomery, LL.D.; Rev. J. Scott Porter; Rev. Moore Getty; Rev. James Callwell, &c. &c. After tea, thanks having been returned and a hymn sung, the President called upon the Secretary, Mr. James Craig, to read the Report of the Committee of the Association for the past year, from which it appears that the number of members on the roll of the Larne and Kilwaughter Young Men's Christian Association has, during the past twelve months, increased as compared with last year, amounting now to eighty-seven, whose average attendance at the monthly meetings has been very satisfactory. During the past year, six ordinary monthly meetings were held, at which papers on the following subjects were read:—December 18, 1861—Works of Fiction, by the President. Jan. 15, 1862—Perseverance Essential to Success, by John M'Ninch, jun. March 12, 1862—Co-operative Societies, by John Rogers, jun. April 15, 1862—Fanaticism, as illustrated in the Life and Career of Mahomet, by John Larmour. June 10, 1862—Human Progress, by James M'Calmont. July 8, 1862—English Poets, down to the Restoration, by James Watt M'Ninch.

During the past year, two lectures, open without charge to the general public, had been delivered by the following gentlemen on the following subjects, viz:—February 12, 1862—Christianity Adapted to Human Progress, by Rev. J. Callwell, Glenarm. May 19, 1862—Benjamin Franklin, by Rev. C. J. M'Alister, Holywood.

In addition to the foregoing papers and lectures, a course of four lectures on Political Economy, under the auspices of the Committee of Barrington Lectures, had, at the request of this Association, been delivered in Larne in September last, by A. M. Porter, Esq., Barrister-at-law, Belfast. These admirable lectures had excited a great deal of interest in the town and neighbourhood, as was proved by the large and respectable attendance upon them of persons of all ranks and persuasions. The library belonging to the Association consists at present of upwards of 150 volumes on various interesting and important subjects, and the books are very generally read by the members.

The Treasurer, Mr. D. NELSON, then submitted a statement of the accounts for the past year, which shewed a balance of upwards of £7 in favour of the Society.

Rev. M. GETTY, Ballyearry, moved the adoption of the foregoing Reports, and the appointment of the following Committee and Office-bearers for the ensuing twelve months, all which were carried by acclamation, viz:—President, Rev. Classon Porter; Treasurer, Mr. David Nelson; Secretary, Mr. James Craig; Librarians, Mr. William Hay and John Rogers, jun. Committee—Messrs. James M'Calmont, Larne; John M'Dowell, Larne; John Larmour, Larne; John M'Ninch, jun., Larne; Alex. Fleming, Larne; George Rogers, Larne; Montgomery Bell, Larne; John Tweed, Weyburn, Cairncastle; Robert Hunter, Ballycraigy; Daniel Hunter, Ballymulloch; John M'Ninch, Ballyboley; Hugh Baillie, Kilwaughter; Alex.

Eaton, Kilwaughter; John Magill, Kilwaughter; John Wallace, Kilwaughter; William M'Culloch, Kilwaughter; John Orr, Carn-duff.

The meeting was then addressed by Rev. Dr. Montgomery, on "Counsels of Experience to Young Men and Young Women," and by Rev. J. Scott Porter, on "Theological Cautions to Young Men of the Present Age." Of these speeches, which together occupied upwards of two hours in the delivery, and which kept the attention of the delighted audience fixed without intermission, it is impossible to give even the briefest abstract in the present report. Suffice it to say, that they were in the very happiest style of the respective speakers, and not only at the time enchanted all who heard them, but evidently made a deep impression on the minds of the young men, which, it is hoped, will be permanently useful. After these speeches, Mr. John Larmour, in a humorous and most entertaining address, proposed the thanks of the Association and meeting to "the Ladies" who had decorated the room and presided at the tea-tables, which well-merited compliment was acknowledged in very suitable terms by Mr. James Craig on behalf of the ladies. A similar acknowledgment was made to "the Stewards" on the motion of Rev. James Callwell, seconded by Hon. W. Porter, Cape of Good Hope. The latter gentleman unexpectedly favoured the meeting with a short but truly beautiful address, in the course of which he took occasion to express his delight, after an absence from his native land of twenty-three years, at finding on his return his friend, Dr. Montgomery, and his brother, Mr. Scott Porter, continuing to be—what they were when he had left them—the consistent and unflinching advocates of Civil and Religious Freedom. During the course of the evening the proceedings were agreeably diversified at intervals by the performance of several pieces of sacred music by the congregational choir, and Mr. James Craig who presided at the harmonium. At length, at a late hour, the President pronounced the benediction, and the meeting reluctantly separated, after having spent together, for upwards of five hours, a delightful and instructive evening, which will be long remembered in the town and neighbourhood of Larne.

OBITUARY.

On December 2nd, in Dublin, aged 80 years, Mary Armstrong, widow of the late Rev. Dr. Armstrong.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Several articles of intelligence held over for want of space.

Communications for the Editor, to be addressed by post to Rev. C. J. M'Alester, Holywood; or, otherwise, to 45, Arthur Street, Belfast.

Orders for the work and business communications to be sent to the Agent of the Society, 45, Arthur Street.

THREE PROTESTS

AGAINST

CERTAIN RESOLUTIONS

ADOPTED BY

THE PRESBYTERY OF ANTRIM,

AT A SPECIAL MEETING,

HELD

ON WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 6TH, 1861.

WITH

A PREFATORY STATEMENT:

AND

AN APPENDIX,

RESPECTING THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE QUARTERLY MEETING,
HELD ON JANUARY 1ST, 1862.

BELFAST:
MAYNE AND COMPANY,
CORN MARKET.

1862.

P R E F A C E.

IN the year 1840 the congregation of York Street, Belfast (then recently formed), applied to be received under the care of the Presbytery of Bangor, one of the three Presbyteries constituting the Remonstrant Synod of Ulster; and was accepted accordingly.

The Remonstrant Synod of Ulster was at that time governed by a Code of Discipline which had been published by the General Synod of Ulster, in the year 1825. In this document, the following Rules were prescribed respecting License:—

“Presbyteries, before they license Candidates to preach the Gospel, *shall ascertain the soundness of their faith*, either by requiring subscription to the Westminster Confession of Faith, *or by such examinations as they shall consider best adapted for this purpose*. The questions proposed to the Candidate, and his answers, shall be recorded in the Presbytery book, signed by himself, and witnessed by the Moderator.

“The Candidate having either subscribed the Westminster Confession, *or given satisfactory answers to the questions proposed by the Presbytery, respecting his religious belief*, shall be thus farther interrogated:—

“Do you promise to study and endeavour to promote the peace, unity, and prosperity of the Presbyterian Church?

“Do you promise to submit yourself, in the Lord, to the government of this Presbytery, or to any other Presbytery in the Synod of Ulster to which you may be transmitted?” (p. 28.)

And among the Rules on the subject of Ordination, the following are included:—

“The Candidate . . . shall then, *for the satisfying of the Presbytery and people, be examined touching his belief in the heads of the Christian religion*, and his future intentions of performing his duty in the congregation. This examination shall be as follows:—

“Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the Word of God, and the only infallible rule of faith and practice?

“Do you adhere to your subscription to the Westminster Confession of Faith; or, (as the case may be,) *do you adhere to the declaration of religious belief made to your Presbytery, at the time you were licensed?*” (p. 38.)

Under these regulations the Rev. W. J. Blakely, the first minister of York Street, was ordained in the year 1840; and on his lamented death, his successor, the Rev. David Maginnis, was ordained, under the same regulations, in the month of September, 1842. On neither occasion was any objection offered to the foregoing rules: nor did the congregation of York Street *ever* express to the Presbytery or Synod any dissatisfaction with them.

In the year 1853, the Remonstrant Synod having determined to draw up a new Code of Discipline, appointed a Committee of ministers and elders for the purpose, who in the year 1856 presented a report, which was considered by the Synod at two special meetings held for the purpose. Finally, the New Code was agreed to, adopted, and ordered to be printed, in the month of March, 1857. In this document the Rules respecting License are altered as follows:—

“Presbyteries, before they license a Candidate to preach the Gospel, shall satisfy themselves *as to his belief in the divine origin and authority of Christianity*. The following questions shall be put:—

“Do you believe in One God, the Creator and Governor of the universe?”

“Do you believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament contain a divine revelation?”

“Do you believe in the divine mission and authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, as the Son of God and the Saviour of the world?” (p. 17.)

And in the Rules for the conduct of Ordination (p. 25), and Installation (p. 26), the same questions are directed to be asked; and are required to be answered in the affirmative. Against these regulations, the Minister and Elder from the congregation of York Street entered their protest.

In the course of October, 1861, the congregation of York Street became vacant by the removal of Mr. Maginnis to that of Stourbridge, in England; and its members soon after ap-

plied to the Presbytery of Bangor to know whether, in the ordination or installation of a successor to him, the questions prescribed by the Code of Discipline would be dispensed with. Having received a negative answer, they resolved to separate from the Remonstrant Synod, and apply to the Presbytery of Antrim, (which is a distinct ecclesiastical body, separate in discipline and jurisdiction from the Remonstrant Synod) to be taken under its care. A special meeting of the Presbytery of Antrim was held on Wednesday, the 6th of November, 1861, for the purpose of receiving a memorial from the people of York Street, and considering the propriety of acceding to their request. The Moderator, in his circular convening the meeting, suggested that all the congregations should send forward elders, to represent them along with the ministers. It is scarcely needful to state, that a Presbytery properly consists both of ministers and elders, although the meetings of the Presbytery of Antrim are ordinarily attended by ministers only. To this meeting the First Congregation of Belfast, being what is called a collegiate charge, (that is to say, having two ministers who are colleagues in the pastorate), sent two of its elders: such being the established practice in all the Presbyterian Churches in Ireland in which collegiate charges exist. But the majority of the Presbytery decided that only one should be received. Against this decision the first of the three following protests has been entered.

The second is against a resolution adopted by the Presbytery respecting the appointment of an elder from the congregation of Ballyclare. Mr. John Dundee, of Bruslee, the senior elder of the congregation, was chosen for the purpose, on Sunday, the 3rd of November, by the Session and Committee, who are the proper body to make the appointment, according to the usage of the congregation and the practice of all the Presbyterian Churches in Ireland. Fourteen out of the fifteen members, of whom the Session and Committee consist, were present when Mr. Dundee was chosen, and only one of them expressed dissent. But a small number of the persons who had been present on that day at public worship remained in the meeting-house after service; and, though they met without any notice to the congregation, and in the absence of the great bulk of its members, a resolution was brought forward that

the elder from Ballyclare should be pledged to vote for the admission of York Street into the Presbytery. But the proposers of this resolution were, on a division, defeated, the votes being declared by the chairman to be equal—22 on each side. The chairman voted, as an individual, for the resolution, but declined to give any casting vote. He then vacated the chair, and he and those who had voted against the pledge went home: but those who were in favour of it, or a portion of them, remained behind, appointed a new chairman, and deputed Mr. Adamson to attend the Presbytery as elder, with a commission declaring that he had been “unanimously elected at a meeting of the congregation.” Mr. Dundee was rejected, and Mr. Adamson received, by a vote of the majority of the Presbytery; and from this decision the minority have recorded their dissent in the second of the subjoined protests.

These preliminary questions having been disposed of, the Moderator laid before the Presbytery the memorial which he had received from the congregation of York Street, which is as follows:—

“TO THE REVEREND THE MODERATOR AND MEMBERS OF THE PRESBYTERY OF ANTRIM.”

“The Memorial of the Congregation of York Street, Belfast, sheweth—

“That your memorialists have been, since the formation of the Congregation, connected with the Remonstrant Presbytery of Bangor, and have always advocated the principles of Non-Subscription.

“That on the recent promulgation of the ‘New Code of Discipline’ by the Remonstrant Synod, the Congregation protested against the putting of certain questions contained therein to Ministers on their induction into the pulpits of Congregations.

“That on the resignation of the charge of the Congregation by Mr. Maginnis, they applied to the Presbytery of Bangor to know if, in the induction of a successor, those testing questions would be put to the candidate; and, the answer being in the affirmative, they felt that the only course for them to adopt, and, at the same time, act up to the principles which they profess, was to withdraw from that Body.

“That, in accordance with this determination, they duly notified to the Remonstrant Presbytery of Bangor, at its meeting on the 29th of October last, the fact of their withdrawal—which withdrawal was duly accepted.

"That, as the Presbytery of Antrim has always adhered to the principle of Non-Subscription, as embodied in the original propositions of 1726, and more recently in the evidence of your respected Moderator in the Clough case, where he stated 'that there is not any creed, confession, or test of a human construction adopted in such Presbytery; and that, as a Body, it relies upon Scripture alone as the true rule of faith, and does not require from its members and ministers subscription to the Westminster Confession, or any other creed of human origin,' and your memorialists acknowledge those principles—they now respectfully ask to be admitted into your Reverend Body, and also that you will supply them with preaching until a stated minister be appointed.

"That Robert M'Millan, John R. Neill, R. W. Gordon, N. Ferguson, Robert M'Calmont, William Service, and Robert M'Farland are the Commissioners appointed to act in this matter, and to present the memorial to your Body.

"(Signed on behalf of the Congregation),

"JOHN R. NEILL, *Chairman*.

"ROBT. M'FARLAND, *Secretary*."

This Memorial having been read, a motion was made—

"That we strongly sympathise with the York Street Congregation in their assertion of the principle of Non-Subscription; and we cordially receive them as members of the Presbytery of Antrim."

On this motion the following amendment was proposed:—

"That this Presbytery is now, as it has ever been, ready to receive under its care any congregations which may have been exposed to hardship or oppression, on account of their avowal, maintenance, and defence of the views of Christian Doctrine which they have conscientiously espoused. But that it is neither alleged in the Memorial which has been this day presented, nor has it been asserted by the Commissioners who have been heard in its support, that the Remonstrant Synod of Ulster, or the Remonstrant Presbytery of Bangor, under whose care the Congregation of York Street was, by its own free choice, placed at the time of its formation, and has ever since remained, ever attempted to interfere with the free adoption, or the free utterance of doctrinal opinion on the part of the minister and people of that congregation. On the contrary, it is notorious that they have always exercised, without molestation either from the Synod or the Presbytery, their right to form and avow their doctrinal opinions in the most unreserved manner.

"That we disapprove of the conduct of the congregation of York

Street, in withdrawing from the Remonstrant Presbytery of Bangor, on account of the refusal of that Reverend Body to ordain or instal a successor to its late minister, without requiring him to answer the three questions specified in the Remonstrant Synod's New Code of Discipline : viz.—*Do you believe in One God, the Creator and Governor of the universe ? Do you believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament contain a divine revelation ? Do you believe in the divine mission and authority of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and the Saviour of the World ?* seeing that the terms of ministerial communion indicated in these questions are much less stringent than those which were sanctioned by the Synod's former code, to which no objection was ever made by the congregation of York Street : while the principles involved in an affirmative answer to these questions seem to us to lie at the very foundation of the Christian Religion ; and to be such, that every conscientious Christian, and especially every minister of the Gospel, ought to be not merely willing but eager to profess and maintain them on all suitable occasions.

“That in conformity with our frequently avowed principles of ecclesiastical union, and the salutary practice handed down to us from our precessors, no minister could be ordained or installed by this Presbytery, without giving an affirmative answer to those questions, or to others of a similar import ; or else making a statement of his sentiments equivalent to an affirmative answer to such inquiries.

“That, for these reasons, and also because the acceptance of the charge of the congregation of York Street, under existing circumstances, would have a tendency to loosen the ties of friendship between the Presbytery of Antrim and the Remonstrant Synod of Ulster, and to impede our united labours for the dissemination of Christian truth, freedom, and holiness, in this Province, we hereby resolve to decline, and we do accordingly decline, to grant the prayer of this Memorial ; and that a copy of this Resolution be forwarded to the Commissioners from the Congregation of York Street, attested by the signatures of our Moderator and Clerk.”

On a division, this amendment was lost by a majority of 12 to 7 ; one elder, who intended to vote for it, having been accidentally absent when his name was called, and one having gone home. The original motion was then put, and carried by a majority of 12 to 8. The minority have recorded their dissent from this vote in the third of the subjoined protests.

PROTESTS.

I.

WE, the undersigned Ministers and Elders of the Presbytery of Antrim, protest against the Resolution by which the Second Elder from the First Congregation of Belfast was excluded from the privilege of sitting and voting at the meeting of said Presbytery, held at Belfast, on Wednesday, the 6th of November, 1861, for the following reasons:—

1. Because the First Congregation of Belfast, being a collegiate charge, is of right, and according to the principles of Presbyterianism as defined by the usage of all those Presbyterian Churches in Ireland in which collegiate charges exist, entitled to be represented by two Elders at all meetings of the Presbytery to which it belongs. The right of such charges to send an Elder with each Minister was expressly recognized by the General Synod of Ulster in 1801, and has been repeatedly exercised at its meetings; as likewise at the meetings of the Synod of Munster, and those of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland; in proof of which we appeal to many entries in the printed minutes of those Reverend Bodies.

2. Because the right of the First Congregation of Belfast, being a collegiate charge, to be represented by two Elders, has been exercised, without challenge or hindrance, at meetings of the Presbytery of Antrim itself, when deliberating on matters of common concern with the General

Synod of Ulster ; as appears by the testimony of the Rev. William Bruce, one of the signers of this Protest, who remembers having been present on more than one such occasion ;—as also at meetings of the said Presbytery, when so deliberating with the Synod of Munster and the Remonstrant Synod, at triennial and other meetings of the Three Bodies of Non-subscribing Presbyterians, constituting the Association of Irish Non-subscribing Presbyterians ; as appears by the printed Minutes of said Association for the years 1838, 1847, and 1850 ; at all which meetings the mover of this Resolution was present, and sat as a member of Presbytery, but made no objection and offered no hindrance. And whereas, in the debate on this Resolution, it was affirmed that no example had been found in our Records, of this right having been exercised at meetings of the Presbytery of Antrim when sitting separately for the transaction of its own private affairs,—we add, that, after diligent search through all the existing Minute-Books, extending as far back as the year 1783, only eight such meetings have been found at which Elders were present ; although during that period upwards of 300 meetings must have been held ; and, at four of these, only one Elder attended ; proving that it was not customary, either before or since the year 1812, (when the First Congregation of Belfast became collegiate,) for congregations to send Elders to our separate meetings, though entitled so to do.

3. Because the right of collegiate charges to be represented by two Elders in our Church Courts is necessary, in order to preserve the equality of the lay and clerical elements in our judicatories ; a principle which is involved in the theory of our Presbyterian form of Church Government as understood and received in this country ; and which would become of great practical importance if any question should arise upon which the ministers and laity should have opposing interests or conflicting claims.

4. Because we can conceive of no argument against the right of collegiate charges to send two Elders to the meetings of Presbytery, if so disposed, which would not be equally valid for depriving one of the ministers of every such charge of his right to sit and vote ;—a consequence which was distinctly admitted by one of the members of Presbytery who spoke and voted in favour of this resolution,—but which the law and practice of every Presbyterian Church, at home and abroad, condemns and refutes.

5. Because, if it were deemed, by any one, right and proper that the First Congregation of Belfast should be deprived of its hitherto unquestioned and repeatedly exercised privilege, it was his duty to bring forward a resolution for abrogating it, after due notice ; and we deny the competence of the Presbytery to effect that or any other constitutional change, by an extemporaneous vote, proposed and carried on the eve of the decision of an important question, with a manifest and scarcely dissembled purpose to influence that decision.

6. Because this manifestly illegal, unjust, and unconstitutional act, whereby one of the members of Presbytery, duly appointed, was deprived of his right to vote, vitiates the constitution of the court, and renders all its subsequent acts, so far as they may be affected by such exclusion, utterly illegal, null and void.

(Signed,)

Ministers.

JAMES CARLEY,
WILLIAM BRUCE,
J. SCOTT PORTER,
CLASSON PORTER,
CHARLES J. M'ALESTER,

Elders.

THOMAS GEORGE,
W. J. C. ALLEN,
MILES ATKINSON,
ALEX. KIRKWOOD.

II.

WE, the undersigned Ministers and Elders of the Presbytery of Antrim, hereby protest against the decision by which Mr. John Dundee was prevented from sitting and voting at the meeting of said Presbytery, held at Belfast, on Wednesday, the 6th of November, 1861, as Elder from the Congregation of Ballyclare, and Mr. William Adamson was admitted as Elder from that Congregation, for the following reasons :—

1. Because Mr. Dundee was chosen by the Session of the Congregation of Ballyclare—the proper body to make the choice—according to Presbyterian practice and the usage of that Congregation.

2. Because, if there were any irregularity in the summoning of the meeting of the Session which elected Mr. Dundee, such irregularity was caused by the neglect of the Rev. John Hall, whose duty it was to take care that everything should be done decently and in order ; and the irregularity was cured by the full attendance of the members on the occasion.

3. Because Mr. William Adamson was not chosen by the Session, agreeably to the Presbyterian practice and the usage of the Congregation of Ballyclare.

4. Because, if the usual custom of the Congregation of Ballyclare had been, to choose an Elder to attend the meeting of Presbytery at a general meeting of the seat-holders, Mr. Adamson was not chosen by any such meeting, no such meeting having been called, either by notice from the pulpit on Sunday the 27th of October, or on Sunday the 3rd of November, or in any other manner ; but, if chosen at all, he was chosen by a hap-hazard gathering of persons, in the absence of the large majority

of the seat-holders who were kept in ignorance of the whole proceedings.

5. Because, if the usual custom of the Congregation of Ballyclare had been to choose an Elder at a general meeting of seat-holders (which the records of the Congregation prove it was not), it was the duty of the Rev. John Hall, when he received the circular of the Rev. the Moderator of the Presbytery, on the morning of the 27th October, to have taken such steps as to secure a properly constituted meeting of seat-holders : but this Mr. Hall neglected to do.

6. Because this manifestly illegal, unjust, and unconstitutional act, whereby one of the members of Presbytery, duly appointed, and fully qualified, was deprived of his right to vote, and another person, not duly appointed, was admitted to sit and vote, vitiates the constitution of the court, and renders all its subsequent acts, so far as they may be affected by this decision, utterly illegal, null and void. (Signed,)

Ministers.

JAMES CARLEY.

WILLIAM BRUCE.

J. SCOTT PORTER.

CLASSON PORTER.

C. J. M'ALESTER.

Elders.

THOMAS GEORGE.

W. J. C. ALLEN.

MILES ATKINSON.

ALEX. KIRKWOOD.

III.

WE, the undersigned, protest against the Resolution for admitting the Congregation of York Street, Belfast, under the care of the Presbytery of Antrim, for the following, among other reasons :—

1. Because it was passed at a meeting which was not constituted in a legal manner, according to the ancient and established usages of the Presbytery ; inasmuch as two Elders, lawfully entitled to vote, were refused their

privilege, and one person was permitted to vote, though not entitled; whereby the Resolution is rendered null, void, and of no effect.

2. Because, even in this illegally constituted meeting, it was only carried by a small majority; whereas, there is no former instance of the admission of a Congregation, except by the unanimous concurrence of all the members of the Presbytery.

3. Because there is no instance of any Congregation, which had been connected with another Presbytery or Synod, having been received under the care of this Presbytery, save upon complaint made and sustained that the privileges of its members had been infringed; or unless restrictions had been laid upon them, or upon their minister, interfering with the free formation and expression of their views of Christian doctrine: whereas, in the case of the Congregation of York Street, there is not only no proof of any such interference on the part of the Remonstrant Synod or its Presbytery of Bangor, but no allegation of it; nor has any reasonable ground been shewn for apprehending any such interference in future.

4. Because the only ground alleged in the Memorial from York Street, for the secession of that Congregation from the jurisdiction of the Remonstrant Synod, is the refusal of the Presbytery of Bangor to violate the laws of their Church by promising to induct a successor to its late minister, without requiring an answer to certain Questions specified in the Synod's Code of Discipline, viz.:—

Do you believe in One God, the Creator and Governor of the universe?

Do you believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament contain a divine revelation?

Do you believe in the divine mission and authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, as the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world?

And because the only intelligible motive that a Congregation can have for objecting to these questions being put to its minister, is, that its members wish it to be optional with him, whether he is to believe or disbelieve the existence of God, the truth of divine revelation, and the divine mission of our Lord Jesus Christ ; or that they wish it to be optional with themselves to elect, if they are so minded, one who disbelieves all or any of these truths ; while yet, they wish it to be imperative on the Presbytery to ordain any minister whom they may have chosen, without ascertaining whether he believes these fundamental truths of the Christian religion or not ; nay, although the Presbytery may have the most painful grounds for apprehending that he utterly disbelieves some or all of them ; and because we cannot recognise, as a Christian Congregation, a society of persons who would wish to claim for themselves, or allow to their minister such a latitude ; nor can we acknowledge, as a Christian Presbytery, one whose members would proceed to ordain or instal any man under such circumstances.

5. Because the acceptance of a Congregation which sought for admission upon the grounds above stated, especially when coupled with an expression of “strong sympathy with the memorialists, in their assertion of the principles of Non-Subscription,” seems to us to pledge those who voted for such acceptance to ordain or instal a minister therein, without putting to him the foregoing questions, or other questions of the same import, or demanding a statement of his views, equivalent to an affirmative answer to those questions ; and without employing any means to satisfy themselves whether the person whom they are about to induct believes in God, the Bible, or our Lord Jesus Christ ;—a procedure which is not only contrary to all the former precedents and ancient usages of the Presbytery of Antrim, but directly opposed to the laws and principles of the Gospel.

6. Because the proposing of these questions to a Candidate for ordination is no infringement upon Christian liberty ; for *Christian* liberty presupposes the acknowledgment of the Christian religion, and that cannot coexist sincerely with a reluctance to profess belief in God, in the Bible, and in the Saviour ; neither can it be truly represented as imposing submission to a Test, Creed, Confession, or Articles of Faith of human composition, in any sense in which these terms were ever used by those who advocated Non-Subscription to Creeds, inasmuch as the Creeds to which they objected are documents embodying the decisions of men on points of doctrine which are, or may be, disputed among Christians, and bind their adherents to one particular interpretation of the doctrines of Christianity ; whereas, the answering of the questions in the Remonstrant Synod's Code leaves the answerer free, as he ought to be, to adopt whatever views of Christian doctrine he believes to be true, and to reject whatever he believes to be false or doubtful.

7. Because the admission of the Congregation of York Street, under the circumstances stated, inaugurates a great and sweeping change in the principles by which the Presbytery of Antrim has been guided since its formation. Our immortal predecessors, in their Propositions laid before the General Synod at Dungannon in 1726, distinctly recognized the right and duty of Ordainers to require, and the obligation of Candidates for ordination to afford, "*clear and sufficient evidence of their soundness in the faith ;*"—and at every ordination and installation in after years, of the details of which any record or memory exists, such evidence has been afforded, either by answers to questions touching the Candidate's belief in the Christian religion, and his acceptance of the Holy Scriptures as his Rule of Faith and Life, or by a statement of his views, involving an answer to such questions. And although the Memorial

from York Street acknowledges the principles set forth in the Propositions of 1726, yet the Commissioners who appeared in its support admitted that they had declared before the Remonstrant Presbytery of Bangor, that "they would not allow any Presbytery to interfere between them and their minister, nor permit any questions whatever to be proposed to him, except through the Congregation;" a declaration which is at irreconcilable variance with the acknowledgment in the Memorial; and equally so with the practice of this Presbytery, the principles of Presbyterianism, and even with the procedure of those Independent Congregations, in which ordination by ministers is observed.

8. Because the culpable laxity shewn in the admission of a Congregation into the Presbytery on grounds so weak and insufficient, holds out a temptation to other Congregations connected with the Remonstrant Synod, to foment schisms in that body, to resist its laws, and set its discipline at defiance, in the hope and belief that they can, at any time, separate from it, and be received into the Presbytery of Antrim; a proceeding which cannot fail to loosen the ties of friendship between this Presbytery and the Remonstrant Synod of Ulster, a friendly Church, holding the same principles of the Sufficiency of Scripture, and Non-Subscription to Human Creeds, which this Presbytery has always maintained, and associated with us in many important undertakings for the growth of religion and the common good.

(Signed,)

Ministers.

JAMES CARLEY.
WILLIAM BRUCE.
J. SCOTT PORTER.
CLASSON PORTER.
C. J. M'ALESTER.

Elders.

THOMAS GEORGE.
W. J. C. ALLEN.
MILES ATKINSON.
ALEX. KIRKWOOD.

APPENDIX.

ON the 1st of January, 1862, the first of the stated quarterly meetings of the Presbytery of Antrim for the year was held in Belfast. At this meeting, as at that of the 6th of November, a second Elder from the First Presbyterian Congregation, Belfast, was refused admittance. An attempt was made to deprive Mr. Dundee, a second time, of his privilege of voting as elder from the congregation of Ballyclare; but the Session and Committee, warned by former experience, had taken care to have a full meeting of the congregation regularly summoned, after due notice to all the members; when his opponents were outvoted by 67 votes against 29. These numbers were disputed, but the poll-book being produced, with the names in full of all who had voted, authenticated by the signature of the chairman and the tellers on both sides, he was permitted to take his place as a member of Presbytery, of which he had been, at the preceding meeting, deprived. An effort was made to unseat the elder from Holywood (Mr. Alex. M'Dowell) for the purpose of putting Mr. Henry N. Smith in his place; and it was broadly asserted that the minister, the secretary of the Session, and the records of the congregation *all* concurred in giving a false statement as to the number of votes tendered on a division (which had taken place previously to the election of Mr. M'Dowell); but after a debate, in the course of which epithets, which it would be painful to repeat, were applied to some gentlemen of unblemished reputation, the attempt had to be abandoned.

The Rev. Charles J. M'Alester then gave notice of his intention to propose, at a future time, a declaratory resolution, for the purpose of removing what might possibly be a misconception as to the intentions of the Presbytery arising out of the late discussions, and of restoring harmony to the body; but seldom has any proposal, or its proposer, been more rudely assailed. Every sort of insult, short of personal violence, was hurled at Mr. M'Alester, and it was with the utmost difficulty that he was enabled to read his intended resolution to the meeting. In vain did Mr. M'Alester declare his willingness to meet the wishes of his opponents by allowing the discussion of his

motion to be postponed till a future day. The offer was indignantly rejected. A motion was made for enabling a Committee of Presbytery to make arrangements for carrying out the installation of the minister elected by the newly-accepted congregation of York Street. Mr. M'Alester suggested that his intended resolution, referring as it did to the manner of conducting installations and ordinations, ought of right to be considered before the motion just made could be properly settled, and requested to be allowed to bring it on first, but the proposal was scouted. He then wished to move it as an amendment, no other course being open to him without sacrificing much of the good effect which was to be expected from his proposition, if agreed to. But neither would this be allowed. The motion before the Presbytery was ultimately adopted; and then the members of the majority, seeing that more than half of the minority had left the place of meeting under the idea that Mr. M'Alester's proposition would not be discussed nor considered at all, insisted that it should be brought on then and there. Although it was obvious that the doom of his motion was predetermined, Mr. M'Alester acceded to their wish, and moved—

“That, whereas recent events in connexion with this Presbytery have caused serious apprehensions in the minds of some members, that candidates for license, ordination, or installation, may be accepted, although they should not believe in the Holy Scriptures as containing a divine revelation, or in the divine mission and authority of Jesus Christ as the Son of God and the Saviour of men,—we do hereby declare, in order to remove such apprehensions, and clearly exhibit the Scriptural character of our church, that to license, ordain, or instal any candidate, without being fully satisfied by his own explicit declaration, or by his answers to questions asked, that he believes in Christ's divine mission and authority as the Son of God and the Saviour of men, and that he believes the Scriptures to contain a divine revelation, would be an obvious dereliction of our Christian duty, a clear violation of the principles on which the Presbytery of Antrim was founded, an open departure from the usages hitherto observed on such occasions, and an utter unfaithfulness to the trust reposed in us, of training or sanctioning persons as duly qualified to instruct our people in the fundamental principles of the Christian faith: and that we have no intention, nor do we mean, to license, ordain, or instal any candidate without being fully satisfied as aforesaid.”

This motion being proposed, the Rev. J. Scott Porter declined to second it, seeing that at the late hour when it was brought in, and in the absence of five members of the minority, who had left the place of meeting under the idea that it was not to be taken up, it could not be fully discussed nor considered. It was seconded by a member of the majority for the avowed purpose of forcing on a decision. Messrs. M'Alester and J.

Scott Porter spoke in its favour amidst interruption and outcries, such as probably were never before witnessed at a meeting of any ecclesiastical body. Very few words were offered in reply, but an amendment was moved by Dr. W. B. Ritchie, seconded by Mr. Edward Gardner :—

“That the Rev. C. J. M’Alester’s motion, containing unwarrantable and unfounded imputations and insinuations against his co-presbyters, be rejected with indignation.”

Before the amendment was put to the vote, the Rev. J. Scott Porter read the original motion over slowly and distinctly, requesting that any member of Presbytery who objected to any word, phrase, or sentence which it contained, as either imputing or insinuating any charge whatever against any person, would stop him when he came to the objectionable passage. It is needless to say that no one stopped him, for every reader will perceive that it is impossible for words to be less open to the charge of containing imputations or insinuations. Nevertheless, on a division, the amendment, as above given, was carried by a majority of 12 to 4.

On these proceedings every mind will frame its own comment.

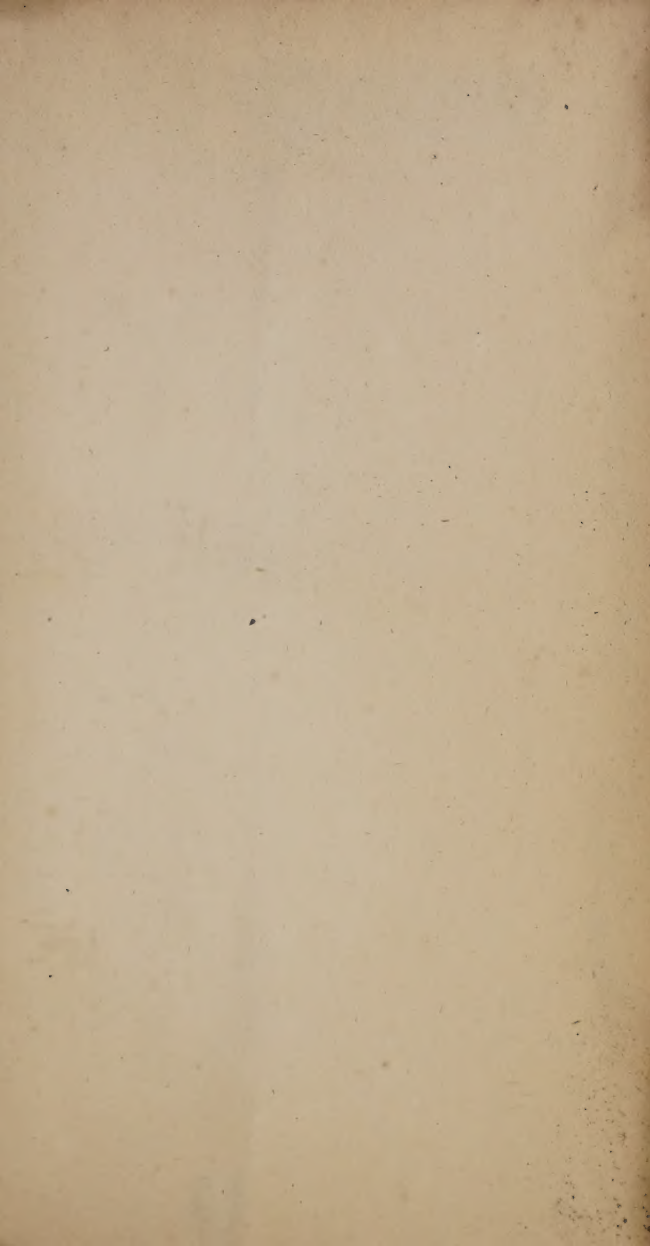
As anonymous statements carry little weight, I append my name, as the writer of the foregoing Preface and Appendix. The Protests, being signed, require no authentication.

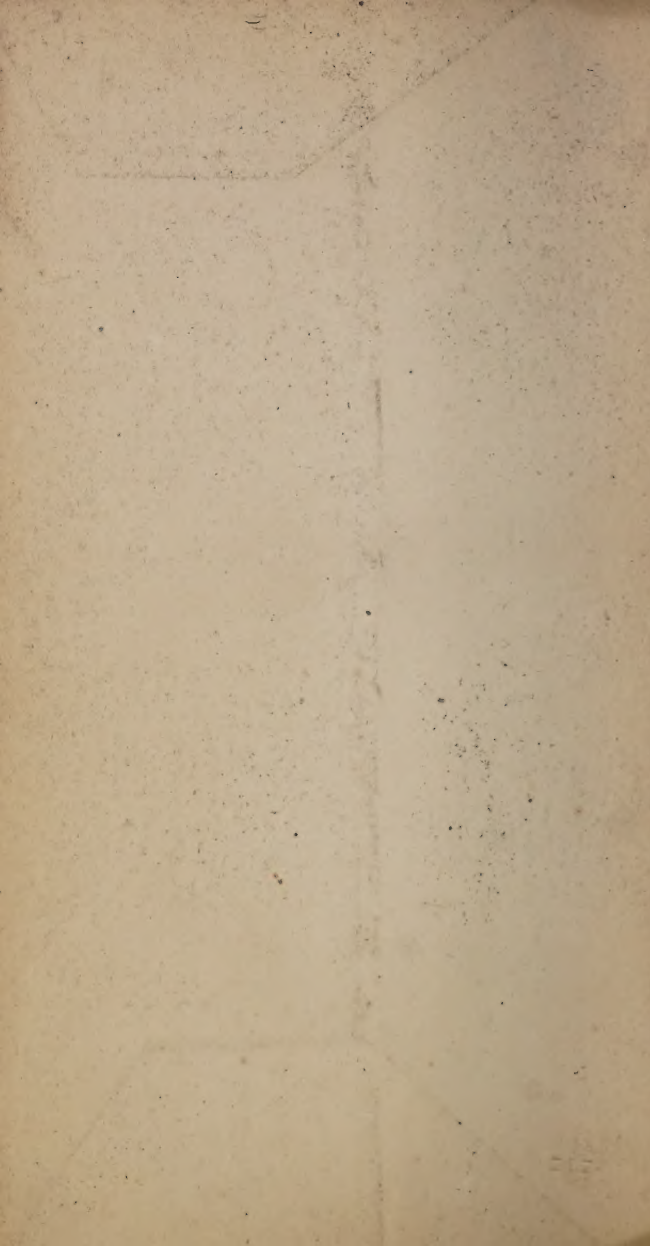
J. SCOTT PORTER.

BELFAST, 14th January, 1862.









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